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BBC under threat, warns Birt

Rise in licence fee is
essential, he warns

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

John Birt, the activist Director-General of the BBC, last night launched an aggressive campaign to increase the licence fee, warning that the Corporation's very future was at risk.

The BBC has had no increase in real terms for a decade. In recent years it has faced painful restructuring and fast-increasing competition from satellite and cable broadcasters.

Mr Birt, attacked by insiders who fear the BBC's public service character is being eroded, made his appeal for more money in strong public-service terms, warning of the dangers of the globalisation of culture. He suggested no figures yesterday, but insiders suggest he wants to see the licence fee rise from its current £89.50 to well

The most effective means of countering the risks of the globalisation of culture and of declining standards is by sustaining publicly-funded broadcasters.

He added: "If the BBC is to remain as creative and dynamic an institution in the 21st century as it has been in the 20th century... then at some point in the future - and for the first time since 1985 - we shall need a real increase in the level of the licence fee."

The licence fee has remained effectively frozen since 1985. In 1991, Margaret Thatcher's government set the universal, compulsory levy at 3 per cent below the rate of inflation, in a move viewed as punishment for alleged anti-fairy programmes on the BBC. The present Government is set to revisit the licence fee issue this autumn.

The miracle is that in recent years, we have not only funded these rising costs on a flat income but have enriched and increased the volume of BBC services," Mr Birt told delegates in his James MacTaggart Memorial Lecture. Sharp cuts in the operating budget of more than 16 per cent over the past three years, along with a jump in commercial revenues from programme sales, publishing and subscription television, helped finance the launch of Radio 5, the extension of Radio 3 to a 24-hour service and a reduction in the number of repeats on the main channels. But Mr Birt said the costs of introducing new digital services, including a 24-hour news channel and extra "complementary" programmes to improve schedules could not be met solely through cost savings and a planned tripling of commercial revenues.

He said the rising costs of sports rights and spiralling fees for talent would combine to make it difficult for the BBC to compete for quality programmes.

He took a swipe at BSkyB, Rupert Murdoch's satellite broadcaster, which will charge £324 a year for a full pay-TV subscription starting on 1 September - three and a half times the BBC levy.

"If the BBC is to maintain its role, then its income will need to rise - as industry revenues expand, as individual incomes grow and as leisure spending increases," Mr Birt said.

But a higher licence fee was not enough to ensure that BBC's digital future, he said. He called on the government to ensure that no single company could control the "gateway" to digital services.

Murdoch's digital plans, page 6.



John Birt: Used strong public service terms

over £100 within two years.

BBC staff hinted that a rise of as much as 8-8 per cent per year might be requested. After that the BBC would hope to see an increase equal to the rate of inflation plus a "low single digit figure" each year over three to five years.

The increase would add £150m-£170m to the BBC's £1.7bn income from next year, which would be used to develop the core channels, BBC1 and BBC2.

Speaking at the opening of the Edinburgh International Television Festival, Mr Birt said that the higher licence fee was vital if the BBC was to meet the "formidable financial challenge" of preparing for the digital age and to help see off the threat of an Americanisation of British cultural life.

"Neither a new leap forward in efficiency, nor a vigorous drive to increase our commercial revenue, will be enough..."

Facts about the TV licence

- The television licence fee is £89.50 for colour and £30 for black and white, and is collected by the Post Office agency TV Licensing.
- In March it said a record 21 million homes have licences after payment was made easier by direct debit.
- In 1995 the BBC said it lost £124m a year in unpaid licence fees.
- In January a campaign

was started to end prison sentences for licence defaulters after it was found many were poor, single mums. One in 13 of women jailed in 1995 was locked up for failing to pay TV fines.

The cost of jailing a typical defaulter on a TV licence fine of £1,000 is thought to be £2,130 - covering detection, prosecution, imprisonment and childcare.

The flower of Ladbroke Grove, radiant for carnival



Party spirit: Keshia Collins, 10, in her costume of 'The Sacred Colour' which she will wear on parade with the Mahogany Band at Notting Hill Carnival this weekend Photograph: Herbie Knott

Tobacco is declared an addictive drug in US

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

President Bill Clinton yesterday declared an election campaign war on under-age smoking, with a host of new restrictions that promise trouble not only for the beleaguered United States tobacco industry but also for Bob Dole, his Republican challenger for the White House.

In a Rose Garden ceremony designed to attract maximum propaganda value from his offensive, Mr Clinton formally accepted the verdict of the federal Food and Drug Administration that nicotine is an addictive drug. He also announced a panoply of measures to curb teenage smoking, as recommended by the FDA in its 1995 report on tobacco and smoking.

Under the new regulations, the first of which will take effect in six months time, cigarette advertising near schools and on products such as hats and T-shirts not directly related to tobacco will be forbidden. The companies will be barred from brand-name advertising at



President Clinton: Biggest clampdown on smoking

sporting events, and limited to black-and-white text-only advertisements in magazines read by children and teenagers.

In addition, the companies will have to set up a \$150m educational programme to deter under-age smoking. There are only two departures from the 1995 proposals: a ban on mail-order cigarette purchases will be

dropped and cigarette vending machines will still be permitted in places such as bars where children are not allowed.

The steps amount to perhaps the biggest-ever clampdown on smoking by the federal government. And even before their promulgation, the tobacco companies denounced them as "illegal and ineffective", vowing to overturn them in the courts.

But their most immediate impact will be on the election campaign as the White House seeks to cash in on this summer's gaffe by Mr Dole when he suggested that smoking might not necessarily be addictive.

Yesterday the Dole campaign sought to present the Clinton initiative as cheap politics, and an effort to distract attention from an embarrassing government report that drug among teenagers had risen sharply since he took office in 1993. "This is an election year gimmick," Elizabeth Dole, the candidate's wife, said during a campaign trip to her native (and tobacco-producing) state of North Carolina. "Bob Dole

has always said children should not smoke."

But that will not affect political calculations at the White House. While yesterday's moves will cost the President votes in the tobacco states (predominantly Republican in any case), polls suggest that they will enhance his support elsewhere by far more.

For the tobacco companies the one scant consolation is that their annual \$6bn advertising budgets will probably be trimmed by \$600m. But Oklahoma yesterday became the 14th state to seek billions of dollars in repayment from the industry for treating smoking-related illnesses, while an Indiana jury is deliberating another high-profile damages suit brought by the widow of a former smoker.

The FDA's goal is to cut teenage smoking by half in seven years. Nine out of ten smokers start before they are 18. Eliminate this market, industry opponents say, and ultimately you will virtually eliminate smoking.

Addiction or habit? page 4

Prison doors will open to violent inmates and rapists

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Rapists and violent offenders are among the scores of inmates to be released from jails in the next few days following a legal blunder that provoked a political furor yesterday.

MPs from all parties, probation officers, and penal reform groups attacked Michael Howard and the Prison Service for the sentencing debacle, which could cost millions of pounds in compensation and is expected to lead to about 5,000 inmates getting out of jail early. The Home Secretary was further embarrassed by the disclosure that he had been kept in the dark until Thursday evening, when the news was broken to him by a journalist.

The row broke as it was revealed that the prison authorities had miscalculated the

length of sentences served by some multiple offenders for the past 30 years.

Up to 100 inmates have been released in the past three days without the normal warnings and preparation. They include a man with a history of drug abuse and violence, Bob Matthews, deputy probation officer in Greater Manchester, said: "We will try and provide accommodation for him but because of the bank holiday that will become increasingly difficult. We have been told by another prison that they are about to release sex offenders and people with a history of violence."

Up to 500 inmates being held in prisons in England and Wales illegally, are expected to be released in the next few weeks.

The blunder was unearthed following a court case last year when the Prison Service first suspected that it had been mis-



CRIME WAVE

interpreting the law. It affects prisoners convicted of multiple crimes who were given several sentences consecutively. The time a prisoner spends in jail on remand before he goes to trial is knocked off his final sentence, but according to new legal ad-

vice, the Prison Service should have been taking the time off each sentence, rather than just once. So a prisoner who spent six months on remand and was given three consecutive sentences should have had 18 months knocked off his final stretch, not just six months.

Prison governors were told last week they had until 11 September to examine the files of about 41,000 of the 57,000 inmates currently held in prison.

This is a severe blow for Mr Howard, coming at a time when he is pushing for the leadership of the Conservative Party. He said: "It is obviously something I wish hadn't happened. Everybody wishes it hadn't happened and the important thing is to put it right as soon as possible."

Labour accused ministers of a "cover-up" after news of the releases leaked out, rather than being officially announced.

QUICKLY

Tuna wars

Armed Irish naval patrols and tracker aircraft were last night poised to intercept Japanese vessels encroaching into EU Atlantic waters after two large ships were arrested for illegal tuna fishing.

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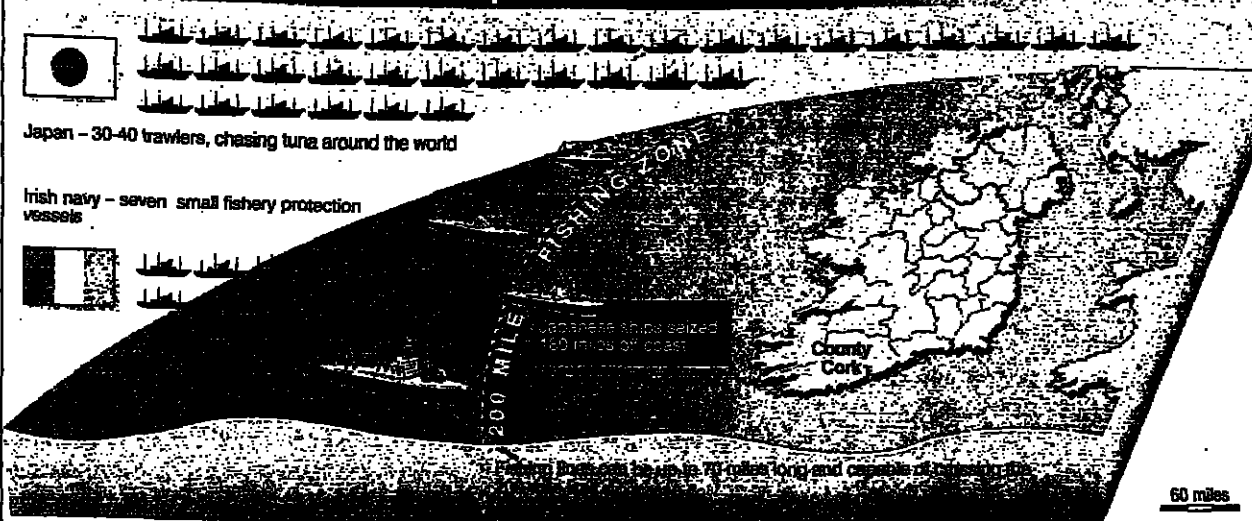
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هكذا من الأناصل

Ireland's tiny navy takes on armada of huge Japanese trawlers using factory methods to plunder Atlantic waters of fish delicacy

Sushi wars - the fleets compared



Irish mouse roars in battle of blue-fin tuna

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

Armed Irish naval patrols and tracker aircraft were last night poised to intercept Japanese vessels encroaching on EU Atlantic waters after two large ships were detained for illegal tuna fishing.

The Irish are maintaining a strong presence at the edge of their 200-mile fishing limit, believing the estimated 40-strong Japanese fleet may attempt to retrieve miles of valuable lines and high-tech radio buoys, along with a substantial haul of prized bluefin tuna.

The incursion into EU waters by part of a 40-strong Japanese fleet off the west of Ireland led to the seizure of one vessel yesterday being charged with illegal fishing at Bandon, County Cork. His ship, the *Minato Maru*, with its crew of 22, was escorted into the Cork port of Castletownhere. The vessel has been ordered to remain in Irish waters pending trial on a date still to be set.

A second, the *Shoshin Maru*, was brought there last night under the supervision of Irish naval officers who boarded it on Thursday. If convicted, the ship's captain faces maximum fines of £192,000 (£208,000). Tragedy struck the Japanese fleet last night when five crew

members on board another vessel, the *Taisei Maru*, died after gas from a refrigeration unit leaked into the ship's engine room. The five dead were all Japanese nationals and included the fishing master, chief engineer and boatswain. It is expected that the ship will be brought to Cork harbour while safety tests are carried out.

The exact size of the fleet is uncertain, as the Irish tracker plane is monitoring the edge of the fishing limit rather than waters further west where the bulk of the fleet is operating.

The Japanese vessels, each with an average size of 500 tonnes, are thought to have moved

northwards from off west Africa and west of Biscay in pursuit of the tuna as it migrates towards warm water feeding grounds.

Fisheries experts say this week's visiting fleet is the biggest seen this close to the coast in years. The Japanese use the "passive" long-line method rather than the controversial "active" gill-nets which sparked US bans and environmental protests because of the fatal snaring of dolphins and porpoises. In the last four years, EU fleets have been limited to using nets of a maximum 2.5 km in length.

The long-line method allows the bluefin tuna to be caught with the minimum of bruising,

thereby retaining its high market value. The technique is capital-intensive and highly skilled, as each line, linked to radio buoys, may carry 1,750 hooks over a 70-mile line, baited with squid.

The chances of successful prosecution depends on obtaining evidence that would connect the marker buoy and its lines to individual ships. Unlike nets, they are not fixed physically to the ship. The link with the *Minato Maru*, detained 180 miles off Galway on Tuesday, emerged after a 15-hour search of the ship when its master admitted the offence.

"Unless we catch them in the act, all we can do is go on board and try and find some kind of reference to the buoy," said Irish Defence Forces spokesman Captain Eoin O Neachtain.

According to Frank Doyle, general secretary of the Irish Fishermen's Organisation, EU restrictions on gill-nets have undermined the viability of Ireland's tuna fishing fleet, which has just seven boats now operating, compared with 20 three years ago, when annual catches were worth £1.3m (£3.04m).

The high costs of long-line fishing has meant that the Irish have mainly fished the albacore tuna, which was at the centre of recent conflict with Spanish, French and English boats.



Safe haven: *Minato Maru* sailor. An explosion on a sister ship killed five last night Photograph: Michael MacSweeney

National passion for perfect seafood

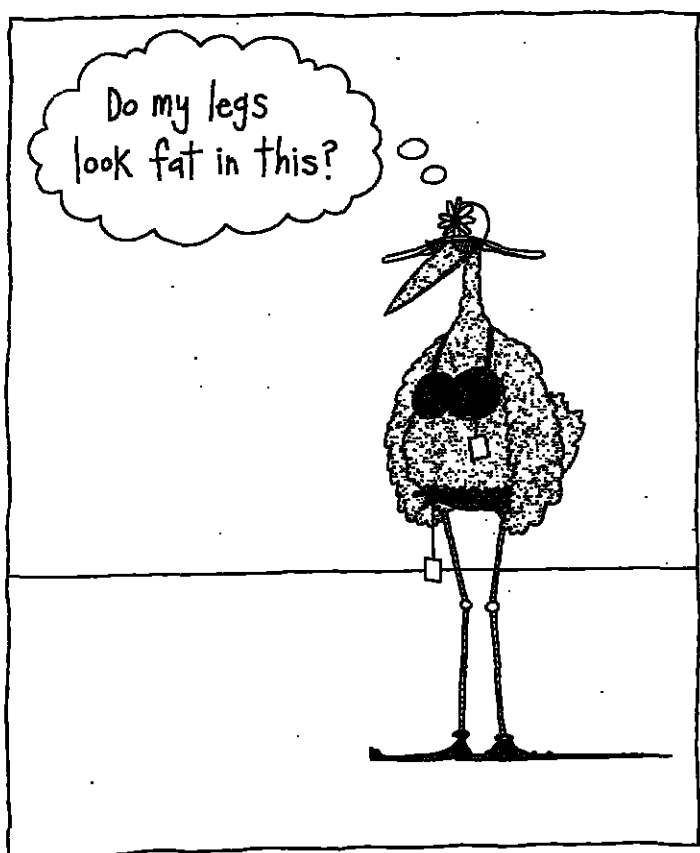
The reason why Japanese fleets criss-cross the world in search of tuna lies in the national veneration of fresh seafood in pristine condition.

The prime market is in fish caught undamaged and unscratched, bled to prevent blood discolouring its meat, and then gutted before being rushed to the kitchen as fresh as possible. But the Japanese lust for tuna is such that there is still a huge market for the frozen variety. Most of the catch would be frozen and taken back by

sea (prices: £11-£20 a kilo), but prime specimens may be flown home immediately.

The very best fresh fish are graded in the world's largest seafood market in Tokyo by testers who determine quality by excising a morsel of the meat and rubbing it gently between their fingers. Top fish fetch £2,000 or more.

Prime specimens are served raw as sashimi, and a customer enjoying a large snack with sake - at a high-class sushi bar will pay up to £120 for the privilege.



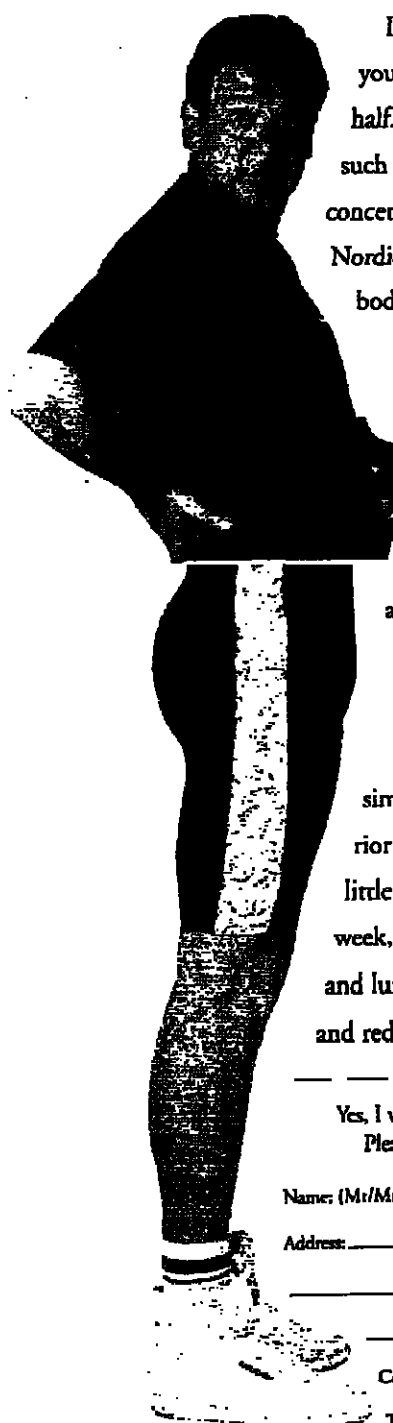
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Church warning on risks of exorcism

Cult-like healing centres see demons in women's rights and acupuncture

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Fundamentalist Christians who see the devil everywhere can drive vulnerable people to suicide, according to one of the Church of England's most experienced exorcists.

Canon Dominic Walker, the Vicar of Brighton, has produced one of the fiercest attacks of recent years on the excesses of charismatic Christianity, groups who claim to be returning to the pure church of the New Testament.

Canon Walker says that on the extreme fringes of charismatic Christianity it is not merely Satanism which is thought to lead to demonic influence, but "such things as acupuncture, women's rights, vegetarianism and even Roman Catholicism".

One of the most influential practitioners is a New Zealand evangelist, Bill Surbritzky, who warns against such supernatural beings as the demons of masturbation, oral sex, and smoking.

In an essay on the casualties of the movement, published in a recent book on Christianity and the occult, Canon Walker writes: "Those who have been involved in such groups often become desperate. Often, they will have been convinced that they are 'demonised' and the inability of the group to cure them will not be seen as any inadequacy or misdiagnosis of the group, but as a result of

deliberate sin or lack of faith on the part of the sufferer.

"This adds to the feeling of guilt by the sufferer and sometimes to the feeling that if the Church does not have sufficient power to exorcise such spirits, then the only cure may be suicide."

Canon Walker said yesterday: "When people come to you for exorcism, you're dealing with people in total desperation, who feel that the medicals have failed them. If they feel that God can't help them either, then they may well kill themselves. I have dealt with people who have tried, and I have dealt with the aftermath of cases where people have succeeded."

In his essay Canon Walker writes: "There are now a number of healing centres which give prominence to the ministry of deliverance and where most visitors are diagnosed as being possessed by evil spirits and return on a number of occasions to undergo exorcism, thus developing a sense of dependency."

"Casualties from these centres will frequently describe cult-like features—lovebombing, lack of privacy with dormitory accommodation, lack of sleep, idolising of the leader, and teaching which cannot be questioned without being accused of being in league with the devil."

"Some churches and centres have developed a complex demonology of various kinds of demons which they claim can possess people. It is not un-



Canon Dominic Walker, one of the church's experienced exorcists, highlights the possible risks, though many exorcisms (right) perform a useful service within the church.

common for people to be told that they are possessed by an in-cubus spirit, which is attacking them sexually, and there have been complaints of sexual assault by some of those claiming

to attempt to exorcise such spirits in what is described as 'internal ministry'.

The most celebrated of these cases involved the Rev Andrew Arbuthnot, who was removed

from his post at the London Healing Mission in 1994 and defrocked for sexually assaulting with a crucifix women in an attempt to rid them of demons that had supposedly entered



them through their genitals. Canon Walker says: "The vast majority of charismatic churches are aware of the dangers of confusing demonic attack with psychological problems or

psychiatric illness." It is only a minority, he says, which produce casualties: "People who have undergone exorcism where it has been carried out by inexperienced people or where it was

quite inappropriate and has resulted in greater disturbance." Every diocese in the Church of England has an exorcist but they are told to be as undramatic as possible.

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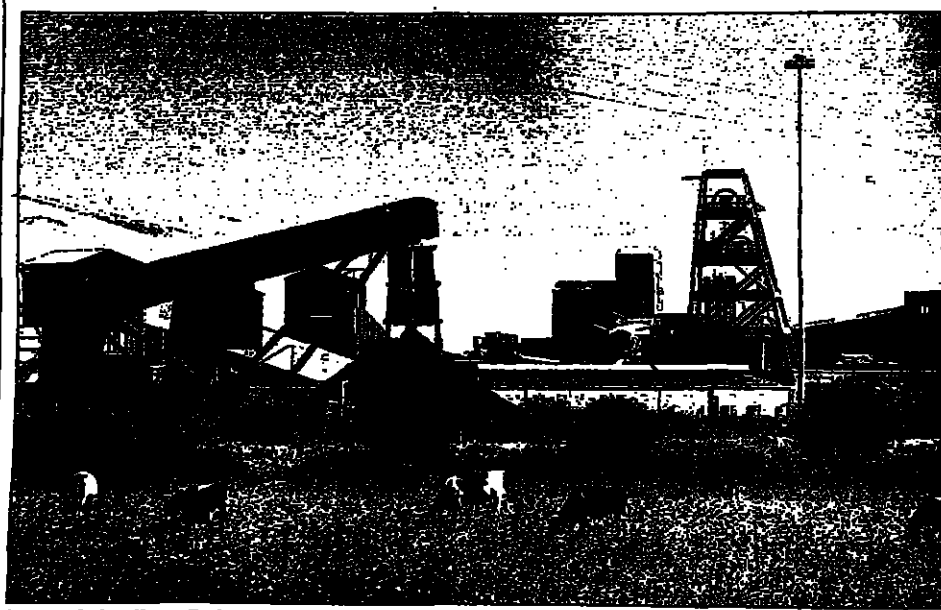
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130 years of history and the hope of 200 miners fail to save pit



Last of the line: Point of Ayr colliery in North Wales is closing and 200 jobs will go

One hundred and thirty years of mining history ended yesterday when coal production ceased at the last pit in North Wales following the workers' decision not to press ahead with an employee buy-out.

Hopes of maintaining the viability of Point of Ayr colliery and saving the jobs of 200 men were raised when unions asked for time to consider a buy-out in the wake of the decision by its owner, RJB, to close it down.

But the pit, which has lost £5m since it was sold to RJB Mining following the privatisation of British Coal 19 months ago, was deemed too risky for a buy-out and now the men will either take redundancy or transfer to mines in Yorkshire.

Bill Rowell, RJB's managing director, said yesterday: "The closure of any mine is sad, but even more so when it has played such an important part in the local economy and is the last mine in a region."

Mr Rowell said the Nation-

al Union of Mineworkers and the pit deputies union, Nacods, had reached the same conclusion as the company after consulting independent experts - that viable operations cannot be sustained at Point of Ayr.

The NUM lodge secretary, Bernie Haniewicz, said: "My reaction is one of great sadness, but we are big enough to stand up and say 'It's not going to work'. We worked closely with the consultants, so their recommendation did not come as a great surprise."

Point of Ayr, sited close to the resort of Rhyl, was sunk in 1868, since when it has extracted coal from under the estuary of the River Dee.

It was originally proposed for closure under British Coal's infamous closure list in 1992 but won a reprieve. Last year the mine produced 313,000 tonnes of coal and made an operating loss of £2.85m. In the first seven months of this year operating losses were £2.15m.

More than 60 miners from the pit have expressed an interest in transferring to RJB collieries in Yorkshire and the Midlands and will be visiting the pits over the next few weeks. Redundancy would be available on the same terms as in 1994.

Mr Rowell added that RJB was offering an attractive package to miners wishing to transfer and he would be "delighted" if most men decided to remain in the coal industry.

"They have skills and talents any business would admire. However, we also appreciate there will be employees who do not wish to move from North Wales for family reasons."

Coal production ended immediately and work will now begin to recover equipment for use at other RJB mines.

The company said it will hold talks with Flintshire County Council on future uses for the site with a view to encouraging new businesses and jobs in the area.

Rape victim's ex-partner petrol-bombed her home

HELEN NOWICKA

The rape victim who endured six days of questioning in court from the man who attacked her was petrol-bombed at her home two months after the assault.

Paul Cunningham, carried out the arson as his former girlfriend, Julia Mason, watched television with her current boyfriend, Billy Power, at their south London home. He claimed they had orchestrated a vendetta against him.

Yesterday, Mr Cunningham was jailed at the Old Bailey for five years after he pleaded guilty to arson. The hearing took place two courts away from where Ralston Edwards, 42,

was convicted of raping Ms Mason, 34, a day earlier.

Ms Mason has waived her right to anonymity following her double rape to challenge the legal convention that allows a sex attacker to cross-examine their victim during a trial if they are defending themselves. The Home Office is to examine issues raised by her case.

Phillip Shorrocks, for the prosecution, said that in February Ms Mason and Mr Power had heard a window smash at their semi-detached home moments before the living room was engulfed by flames.

Nine days later, Mr Cunningham, 21, of Bellingham, south London, went to police

and admitted he had thrown a milk bottle containing petrol and burning newspaper through a window of the house which he thought was empty.

Mr Cunningham, who once shared a flat with Mr Powell, claimed the couple had "done their best to make his life a misery and that they and other members of the Power family had made false allegations to the police to the extent that he was arrested twice", said Mr Shorrocks.

In mitigation, Adrian Fulford said detectives "accepted" that both the Power family and Ms Mason had been responsible for unfounded allegations against Mr Cunningham.

BS of In 0.

MATTHEW MURRAY
The great...

Charles Arthur...

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Stretching a...

BSkyB to offer the Internet on TV

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Rupert Murdoch's yesterday announced multi-million pound plans to introduce 200 digital television channels in the UK next year, offering subscribers Internet access, home shopping and banking, and as many as 60 channels dedicated to pay-per-view movies and sport.

The project – now under development at BSkyB's Osterley headquarters in west London and at a state-of-the-art customer service centre in Scotland – is due to be launched in the final months of 1997, and will

be prepared in tandem with BT, the telecommunications operator, which has engineers working with BSkyB staff in Scotland to test the new technology.

Several banks, led by Barclays and the Co-operative, are also in talks with Sky to develop secure banking services for digital customers. Pay-television programming, including the existing Sky channels, will also be available. Customers will be required to pay about £200 for decoders, which are likely to cost at least that much to make. BSkyB hopes that the manufacturers, as well as service providers such as banks and retail outlets, will agree to subsidise production costs in order to encourage take-up rates.

Media analysts predict the service could emerge as the standard in digital television, eclipsing government plans to encourage the growth of digital terrestrial television.

David Elstein, head of programming at BSkyB, said: "The real home run for Sky would be if the digital platform becomes the industry's standard."

Cable operators, which have been desperately competing to develop a profitable market in the pay-television sector, have until recently trumpeted the interactive advantages of cable over satellite. But Sky's new high-speed modems and decoders, which require a telephone line to be fully interactive, could trump cable's digital plans.

Mr Chisholm insisted that Sky's current analogue service would not be replaced by digital. "There's room for both services," he told analysts following the unveiling of BSkyB's results earlier this week.

A measure of the company's commitment to analogue transmissions is its plans for several high-profile pay-per-view boxing events this autumn. These follow the successful debut of pay-per-view earlier this year, for the Bruno/Tyson fight.

BSkyB's £30m service centres in Livingston and Dunfermline provide the technical back-up for pay-per-view, which allows customers to dial up an automated system, arrange for payment and await a signal to unscramble the picture on the television. The system is currently being upgraded to allow for additional pay-per-view events to be broadcast this year.

Eventually, the centres will also handle BSkyB's digital pay-per-view services, featuring top sports, concerts and movies.

The digital road

BSkyB's plan to offer a high-speed connection to the Internet via satellite dishes is the electronic equivalent of building a three-lane motorway for one direction only, writes Charles Arthur. The Internet is at its most useful as a two-way medium. BSkyB seems to be using it to sell a digital television service that looks like a product in search of a market. Normally, "surfing" the Internet requires a two-way telephone link. BSkyB's digital satellite system will be able to send a concentrated stream of data to customers at 7,000 times the speed of a phone line. But viewers will need an outgoing connection to navigate around the network. Thus the 150-odd companies providing Internet access in the UK were unruffled yesterday. Graham Davies, managing director of Easynet, said: "It will be a one-way service, which means there's only so much you can do. It's interesting, but it wouldn't compete or be dangerous to us." But those companies are struggling among each other for profits: the £50 are expected to slim down to five or six in a few years. BSkyB might just be in a position to reap some benefits, in time. But it must lay the other side of the digital road first.

supplement Sky's existing analogue subscriber base of 5.5 million customers.

According to Sam Chisholm, chief executive of BSkyB, viewers will be able to shop and bank from home through a high-speed modem and a new set-top decoder, using their television screens to access the worldwide Internet computer network.

The digital launch is being

Suitcase aquarium causes ripples in the art world



CHARLIE BAIN

It's a step up from a plastic bag and more portable than a pond but the suitcase aquarium and its inhabitant Fred the fish are causing almost as many ripples as Damien Hirst's sheep. The main attraction at an exhibition of graduate art, Fred happily lazed about in his tailor-made home at Camden Arts Centre in London yesterday, oblivious to the debate raging around him. The animal rights group Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) believes Fred has a raw deal. "Forcing a fish to exist in a small tank, under bright lights, without other fish for company, is plainly cruel," Toni Vernelli, a spokeswoman, said. Bill Swann, the RSPCA's assistant chief veterinary officer, said goldfish owners should mimic a fish's environment. However Fred's owner, James Chinneck, 22, said: "I can't understand what all the fuss is about. I'm trying to make an artistic statement and Fred couldn't be happier."

Creative partnership: James Chinneck shares a moment with Fred, the fish said to be confined in cruel conditions Photograph: Andrew Buurman

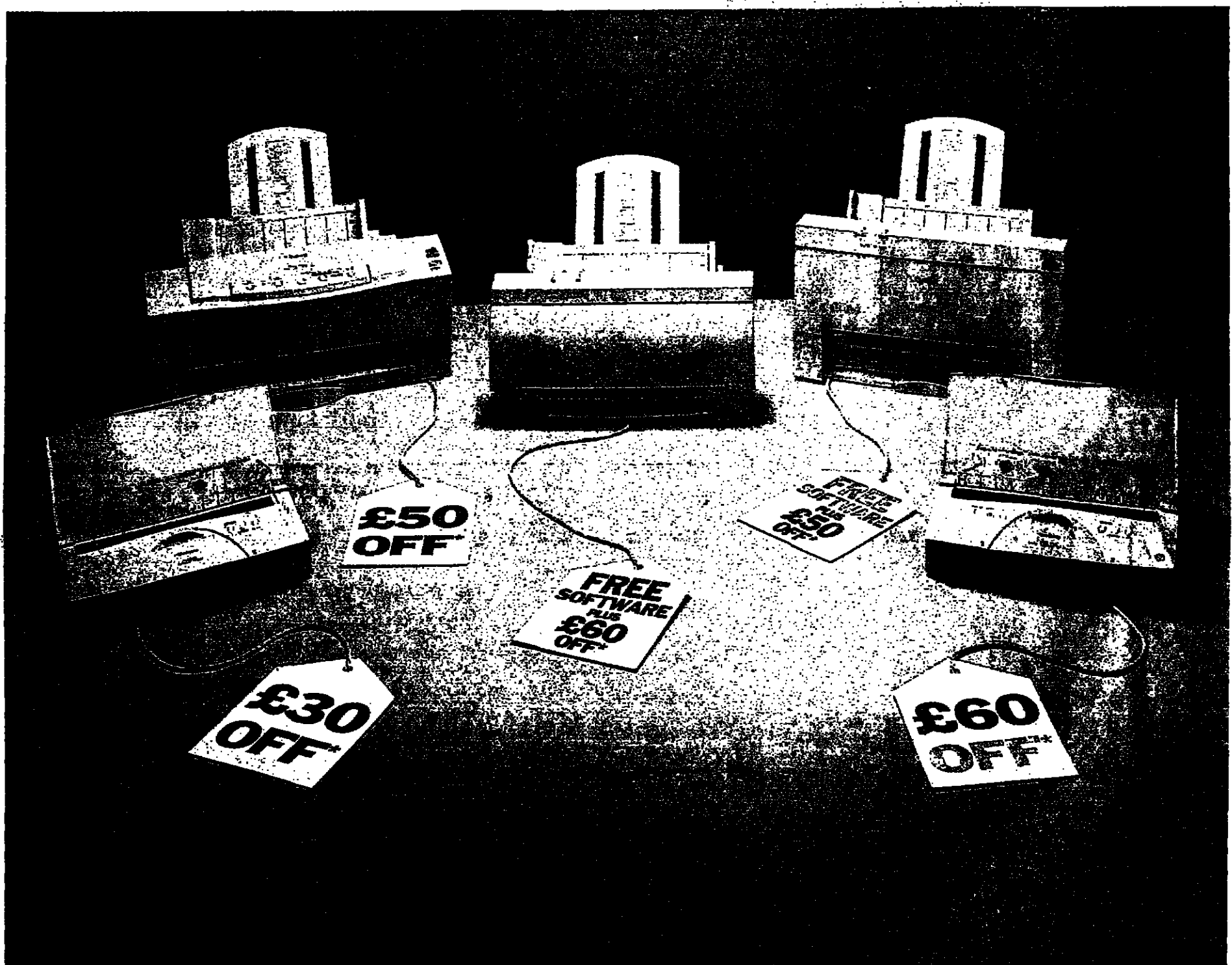
computing

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Lloyd Webber fanfare produces play on words

Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote theatrical history this week when he announced that his revived musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* will reopen the Lyceum Theatre in London and that the Lyceum "celebrates its return to live theatre production after a 56-year absence".

Not quite, actually. As I recall, the Lyceum put on the National Theatre's *Mystery Plays* a mere decade ago. The publicity officer for *Superstar* is one Peter Thompson who also happened to be the publicity officer for the *Mystery Plays*. "I did point this out to the Really Useful Group," Thompson admits, "but the view was that as the

Artspeople
with David Lister

Mystery Plays were promenade performances they didn't count as productions on the stage." There's lateral thinking for you.

David Strassman, the American ventriloquist, has been packing in audiences at the Edinburgh Festival, but has not received the expected nomination for a Perrier Award. "Take away the dummy and what have you got," a Perrier official told the press in Scotland. This has caused some bafflement in the Strassman camp. "That's a bit like saying 'take away the emu and Rod Hull just isn't funny'," his spokeswoman, Sally Homer, says bitterly.

That most private of actors, Alan Rickman, will be stripped of a little of that privacy in the first biography of him, written by theatre critic Maureen Paton and published in October. It will claim that Rickman has carefully shielded his working class background from the media. He was a scholarship boy from a west London council estate and went to Latimer school where he was taught by Colin Turner who also nurtured Hugh Grant and Mel Smith. Rather unromantically the book also reveals that Rickman's sensual drawl is in fact caused by a speech defect. Who wouldn't kill for such a defect?



Lloyd Webber: Stretching a point over 'Superstar' revival

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international

Lull in Grozny, and silence in Moscow

Brian Killen finds cynicism and grief in Chechnya, while Lebed's game plan is still unclear

Grozny (Reuters) — It was high noon in the Chechen capital Grozny yesterday, but the gunmen decided not to draw.

A ceasefire had just taken effect. A few Russian military helicopters circled overhead firing the occasional flare. Separatist rebels patrolled the streets and hundreds of refugees took advantage of the lull to revisit their homes.

But few people believed that the relative calm would last long. After almost two years of war, the cemeteries in this rebellious North Caucasus region are full of mothers crying over freshly-dug mounds.

Aisa Abdulazimova was tending the grave of her only son against a background of thick black smoke billowing from fires in oil storage areas of Grozny's main industrial zone.

"Look at that, they have no thought for the mothers," she said, weeping as she remembered her 23-year-old son who was killed early last year in the first weeks of the war. "They never stop digging here."

Hope of a lasting peace was dulled by a more ominous silence in Moscow, where the Kremlin refused to comment after Boris Yeltsin's envoy, Alexander Lebed, struck the

ambitious truce deal with Chechnya's separatist rebels and vowed to return today to seal a political settlement.

The President did not even seem ready to meet the man who, after less than a fortnight in charge, claimed to have put an end to the 20-month war which has ruined countless careers and once seemed likely to cost Mr Yeltsin July's election.

Just hours before Thursday's agreement in Chechnya, Mr Yeltsin had even gone on television for the first time in two weeks to chide Mr Lebed for his slow progress, prompting speculation he was either about to dump Mr Lebed or was simply out of touch.

The impression, not for the first time, is that Russian policy on Chechnya, where tens of thousands have died since Mr Yeltsin sent in troops in December 1994, is adrift.

Mr Lebed flew back to Moscow from Chechnya early yesterday, saying he planned to brief Mr Yeltsin on the truce and on the political pact planned for today on relations with Chechnya.

But the presidential press office denied the meeting. A Kremlin source later told Interfax news agency the two might meet, but not until next week —



Peace deal: Alexander Lebed (centre) and Aslan Maskhadov (left), the Chechen rebels' chief of staff, announce the truce

Photograph: Reuters

only after a political accord.

In Grozny, rebel fighters wielding Kalashnikovs and grenade-launchers remained in control of much of the city. But tension was high and occasional firefights broke out even within minutes of the midday truce starting. A T-72 tank, captured

from the Russians eight days ago, stood in a courtyard at a rebel base next door to a city hospital. The loud hammer of a machine-gun nearby sent some of the rebels scurrying to return fire.

Others shrugged it off and continued to play backgammon. "There has been some

shooting from their side, but it has been relatively quiet," said rebel fighter Aslan Shabazov. The tank, flying the green rebel flag with its black wolf insignia, then swung into action, almost knocking down a tree as it reversed out of the yard throwing up a cloud of dust.

There was a sporadic crack of gunfire from the other side of an adjacent building. Then it all fell quiet. "We are silent, and they are fighting," Mr Shabazov said.

Inside the rebel headquarters, Muslim fighters rested on beds or on the floor. Some drank tea, others listened to music. One 18-year-old, Isa Usupov, recited a poem about the laws of war. "Blood for blood. Kindness for kindness," he said, ending the verse with three chants of "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest). In Moscow, there was no indication what po-

litical deal Mr Lebed might be proposing. He has said Chechen independence is not taboo for him. But it has always been the sticking point for Moscow. Despite the supposedly sweeping, though never publicly spelled out, powers given to Mr Lebed by Mr Yeltsin to end the crisis, there has been no indication that the Kremlin is ready to let him offer secession as an option — least of all in the wake of the Russian army's humiliating loss of Grozny on 6 August.

That leaves nothing but theories about what is going on. Mr Lebed himself says a "party of war" in Moscow is trying to sabotage his peace talks, possibly faking Mr Yeltsin's orders while the President is indisposed. Aides deny the President is ill but he still looked stiff and slow on television on Thursday.

Mr Lebed reckoned this week's threat by the Russian army to bomb Grozny flat was a result of such scheming. For now, the Russian army generals seem to be going along with Mr Lebed's plan to pull troops out of some districts in Chechnya.

One variation on the simple power struggle theory is that Mr Yeltsin still runs policy and is playing his various underlings off against each other to see which one is most successful.

His refusal to meet Mr Lebed may just be the classic tactic of retiring from the scene until it is clear who is doing best.

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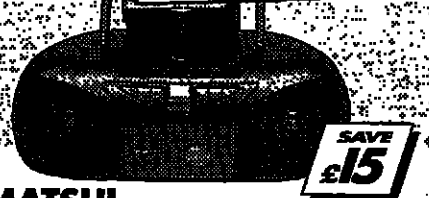
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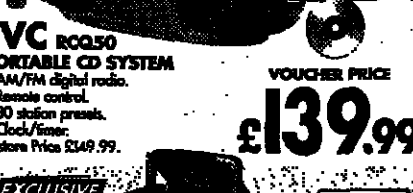
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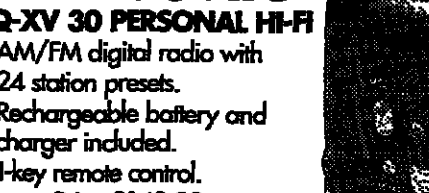
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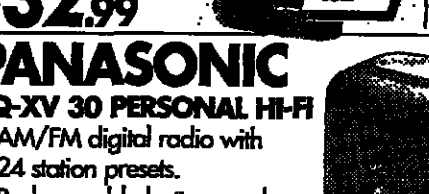
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Mafia experts suspect defector's 'revelations'

PHILIP PULLELLA

Reuters

Rome — A decision by former Mafia boss, Giovanni Brusca, to collaborate with Italian magistrates could be devastating to the Mob if his "revelations" are genuine and not meant to throw investigators off course, experts said yesterday.

"Magistrates must always show caution when such 'eminent' figures such as Brusca adopt attitudes like this," said

Brusca, one of the Sicilian Mob's most brutal members in a violent organisation, headed the crime group after the 1993 arrest of "superboss" Salvatore Riina. He was a top lieutenant during Riina's reign over the Corleone clan. He could help solve many crimes and shed light on the murky links between the Mob and politics.

Pino Arlacchi, a left-wing MP and leading Mafia expert, said he believed Brusca decided to talk because the Corleone clan had been decimated by a spate of arrests. Mr Arlacchi said now there was nothing to hold back the 70-year-old Riina himself from collaborating with justice since all he has before him is a life in jail.

Italy has for years debated the trustworthiness of mobsters who have sworn religious allegiance to an organisation committed to fighting the state.

The Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, said he was confident that the highly experienced magistrates handling Brusca

would be able to "distinguish between who is telling the truth and who is faking".

If Brusca's "repentance" is sincere, he would be the most important informer to the state's evidence since Tommaso Buscetta, a Mafia boss who began collaborating with magistrates in 1984 and is now free.

An elaborate US-style witness protection programme offers Mafia informers reduced sentences, safe houses, protection for them and their families, a salary and the chance to change identity.

A contract commits a turncoat to answer all magistrates' questions truthfully. He is not allowed any contacts with the outside world unless they have been cleared by magistrates. Officials said Brusca had not yet been admitted into the programme and one newspaper questioned whether that would be possible, given the magnitude of his crimes.

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Paris crackdown: Bells toll to raise alarm ... then military-style operation evicts migrants after hunger strikes and two-month protest



Hard line: Sympathisers of the sit-in clash with police (left) trying to get into the church at the start of the operation. Afterwards, a mother and child (right) are led away, facing likely deportation

Photographs: Reuters/AP

Violent dawn raid ends sit-in at church

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The vast police operation began shortly before 7.30 yesterday morning, when the first ambulances, police vans and buses drew up in the vicinity of the church of St Bernard, a neo-Gothic building in a quiet square between the Gare du Nord and Montmartre.

Inside, according to one eyewitness, there was fury and tears, but little panic. A long campaign by several hundred illegal immigrants to remain in France came to a precipitate end as riot police used tear-gas and batons to evict them from the Paris church they had occupied for the past two months.

The move came less than 24 hours after the government was advised by a senior legal body that the immigrants – mostly from Francophone Africa and the Maghreb – had no right to stay in the country.

Ten of the protesters, who had just embarked on the fifth day of a hunger strike, were taken away on stretchers to hospital. More than 200 others, including many children, were transported to a detention centre in eastern Paris. Officials said that "several dozen" could have their status in France regularised; the rest are expected to be deported within the next 24 hours.

A woman upbraided riot policemen: 'A church, how could you? Sheer profanity'

The priest, Henri Coindé, who had refused to sign any authorisation for police intervention since the occupation began on June 28, asked for classical music to be played on the organ and remained at the altar, reading from Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech. The 300 protesters sat down in the nave of the church, with their children in their arms.

The first detachment of police burst in only a few minutes later, simultaneously through all four entrances.

They had cut through the fastening of the iron gates and hacked down the wooden doors. They ringed the hunger strikers, lying in sleeping bags in an alcove behind the altar, grabbed the microphone from the priest as he reached a passage about "observing human dignity" and then tried to separate the single men from the families.

At the first sign that the group was being divided, there were screams and fists started flying. Police used their batons; tear-gas filled the air, but

police deny using it in the church, describing it as a "provocation". Outside, supporters lay down in front of the buses that drew up to take the immigrants away. They were removed just as summarily as the protesters inside.

Professor Leon Schwarzenberg, a left-wing scientist prominent in his support of the protest from the start, was forcibly carried away.

The actress Emmanuelle Béart, who had slept in the church during the last week of the protest, picked up a small black child and refused to let him go; she was eventually arrested and led out of the church to a secure van – to cheers from the small crowd around the church precinct. She was later released without charge.

By 10am the operation was almost complete. It had involved more than 1,000 police – city police, riot police and plainclothes police (bizarrely identified as such by red armbands).

A shambles of awnings and mattresses to one side of the church, where the campaign headquarters had been, a pair of women's sandals in the gutter, and a child's toy car lying in the road, were all that visibly remained of the protest.

A hundred or so supporters of the protest remained within the police cordon, but the church was empty and guarded all round like a military object.

Outside the front gate, one woman upbraided a trio of policemen in full riot gear: "A church, how could you? Sheer profanity." In the windows and doorways of the tall apartment buildings surrounding the square were little clusters of people, watching. From one window hung a tired-looking banner saying "No expulsions" in big awkward letters.

Beyond the police cordon, angry supporters of the protest, including many wearing trade-union stickers, chanted: "First, second, third or fourth generation! We are all children of immigrants." Senior officers checked their street maps and listened to their walkie-talkies.

While the operation attracted a welter of condemnation from the political left and from many churchmen, including the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, it was applauded by many on the right, including the extreme-right National Front. From all sides, however, there was severe criticism of the government for allowing what began as a localised protest to grow into a national crisis resolved only by force.

Yesterday's operation was the third big mobilisation of police against the same group of illegal immigrants, the third opportunity for supporters to rally, and the third harrowing photo-opportunity for the media. The government is reported to have military plans on standby for the inevitable deportations. No commercial company would even consider leasing its planes: "It would be disastrous publicity for the airline," said one representative, declining to be named.

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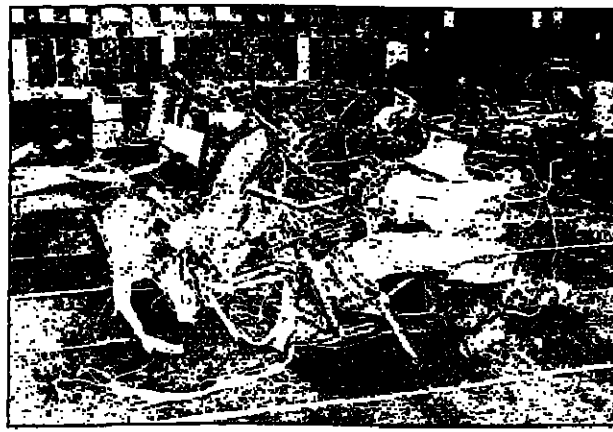
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international



Tangled mass: Wreckage from the jet in a hangar for analysis

Seat of Flight 800 revealed traces of explosive

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

Traces of a common explosive have been found in the wreckage of TWA Flight 800, the *New York Times* said yesterday, further strengthening the likelihood that a bomb or a missile destroyed the Boeing 747 aircraft on 17 July, killing all 230 people aboard.

Although neither the FBI nor air-safety officials would confirm the report, the news-

paper quoted three officials closely involved in the investigation as saying that traces of pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN), a chemical widely used in plastic explosives and missiles, had been detected in debris from the front-central part of the aircraft where the original blast occurred.

"I'm not going to comment at all," Robert Francis, the deputy chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said yesterday, insisting that inves-

tigators were still trying to establish the precise cause of the accident. Publicly, Mr Francis says no more than that an explosion close to the jet's central fuel tank brought about the crash. This assertion had helped keep alive the theory that vapours in the nearly empty tank caused the explosion.

But that possibility has now been all but discounted by the FBI. According to the *NYT*, analysis at bureau headquarters here of part of a seat from the

front central area confirmed the presence of PETN more than a fortnight ago. But the news was kept secret in the hope of finding more evidence that would pin down whether a bomb or missile was responsible. Without that, no suspect could ever have been brought to trial. Further contributing to investigators' caution, no trace of the explosive has yet been found on other pieces of wreckage from the same section of the aircraft.

Assuming the PETN finding

was borne out, the TWA disaster would rank as the deadliest single crime in United States history, a grim distinction now held by the Oklahoma City bombing of April 1995 which killed 168 people, and before that the August 1990 arson at a Bronx social club, when 87 died.

But if it now seems virtually certain that Flight 800 was sabotaged, no firm clue has emerged as to who was responsible. No credible claims have come from any terrorists, though circum-

stantial links with Iranian groups have been aired in the media. The "black box" flight recorders have shown only that the sudden split second of noise at the recording's end is "different" from the one on the recorder of the PanAm 103 blown up by a bomb in suitcase in the cargo hold over Lockerbie in 1988.

Investigators have been combing the backgrounds of the victims, in case one of them might have been the target of a revenge attack.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Jordan has asked an Iraqi diplomat to leave the kingdom for "carrying out duties incompatible with diplomatic norms", an official source said. It came after Amman blamed Iraq and a pro-Baghdad local party for last week's worst unrest in seven years after a decision to double bread prices. In Karak, the Friday prayers that were the starting point for the riots passed peacefully under tight security. In the town of Salt, 15 miles from Amman, 300 men marched, demanding the release of residents held in connection with unrest. Some stoned the police, but the security forces did not intervene. *Reuter - Amman*

Belgian police faced more questions over how they failed to save two eight-year-old victims of a convicted sex offender. One campaigner said sex gangs preying on children may have enjoyed high-level protection. The Justice Minister, Stefaan de Clerck, admitted on Thursday that mistakes had been made in the past but said there was no proof of any conspiracy among officials. Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo were found dead last weekend, victims of a paedophile gang. *Reuter - Brussels*

Croatia and Yugoslavia, one-time battlefield enemies, signed papers establishing diplomatic relations. The agreement between the largest rivals of the region is considered crucial for stability of the area, reeling from the war that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia. It was signed by Croatia's Foreign Minister, Mate Granic, and his Yugoslav counterpart, Milan Milutinovic, who sought to play down differences that led to war. *AP - Belgrade*

A Cambodian editor began serving a one-year prison sentence after the Supreme Court upheld his libel conviction for calling the country's two prime ministers, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen, a pair of thieves. Hen Viphav, editor of *New Liberty* newspaper, was the second editor in three months whose libel conviction under an old law has been upheld, despite a more lenient media law since passed by the government. *AP - Phnom Penh*

Turkish troops, stepping up operations against Kurdish guerrillas in the country's south-east, killed 17 rebels, Anadolu news agency said. Two soldiers also were killed in the clashes in the provinces of Van, Sirnak and Hakkari. Three people were killed when their car hit a mine, believed to be planted by Kurdish rebels, near the town of Kulp in Diyarbakir province. *AP - Ankara*

Indonesia did not care if the US cancelled a proposed sale of F-16 fighter jets because of its human-rights record, a senior Cabinet member, BJ Habibie, the Technology Minister, said. *AP - Jakarta*

TV tale of sex, taxes and the minister's 'vendetta'

Imre Karacs in Bonn on the star who had the plug pulled on her chat show

Shortly before midnight on Thursday, millions of television screens flickered simultaneously across Germany, and an instant later the nation's favourite chat-show hostess was gone. For the first time in German television history, a station had pulled the plug on a live programme because of its content.

"This is the moment you all have been waiting for," Margarethe Schreinemakers told her 3 million viewers. But they had to keep on waiting: because with lightning speed, SAT-1 management cut from Schreinemakers' Cologne studio to its Berlin newsroom.

What could have been so offensive? Schreinemakers' weekly three-hour programme was always charged with controversy and laced with sex, often bizarre, yet her in-depth reports on leather fetish or bestiality never stirred the passions of an immunised German audience.

But this time Schreinemakers was treading far more dangerous territory. She was about to tell a strange story involving her taxes, the Finance Minister and his ex-wife, and the most explicit word she was threatening to use was "vendetta".

"We are of the opinion that a chat-show hostess cannot and must not deal with this subject on air," was the prudish explanation offered by the commercial channel SAT-1. Nevertheless, it is a subject about which, for weeks, newspapers, magazines and television channels have been inundating their audiences with details of Schreinemakers' tax-avoidance;

an activity of which Germans strongly disapprove even if they pursue it themselves.

The accusation is that Schreinemakers, 38, moved abroad in order to avoid paying her dues to German society. She commutes from Liege, Belgium, where she owns a farmhouse. She also owns a production company in the Netherlands, some of whose profits she repatriates to a tax haven in the Dutch Antilles. She is reckoned to be worth about DM25m (£12m), and to have paid only 16 per cent tax on last year's earnings of about DM4m.

So far the story is no different from any other German star's, except that Schreinemakers claims the campaign against her is being organised by none other than Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister. "I have the feeling that Waigel wants to get me," she says.

Why? Because of the way she allowed Mrs Waigel to publicise her husband's extra-marital affair. At the time, about two years ago, the press had reported the breakdown of the Finance Minister's marriage, but portrayed his wife as a depressed hag from who Mr Waigel would under-

standably want to separate himself. Schreinemakers gave Karin Waigel air time, and the public learnt the real reason Mr Waigel had found a woman 20 years younger and the couple were expecting a baby. Mrs Waigel came through as a strong and sympathetic woman; Mr Waigel emerged as a philanderer.

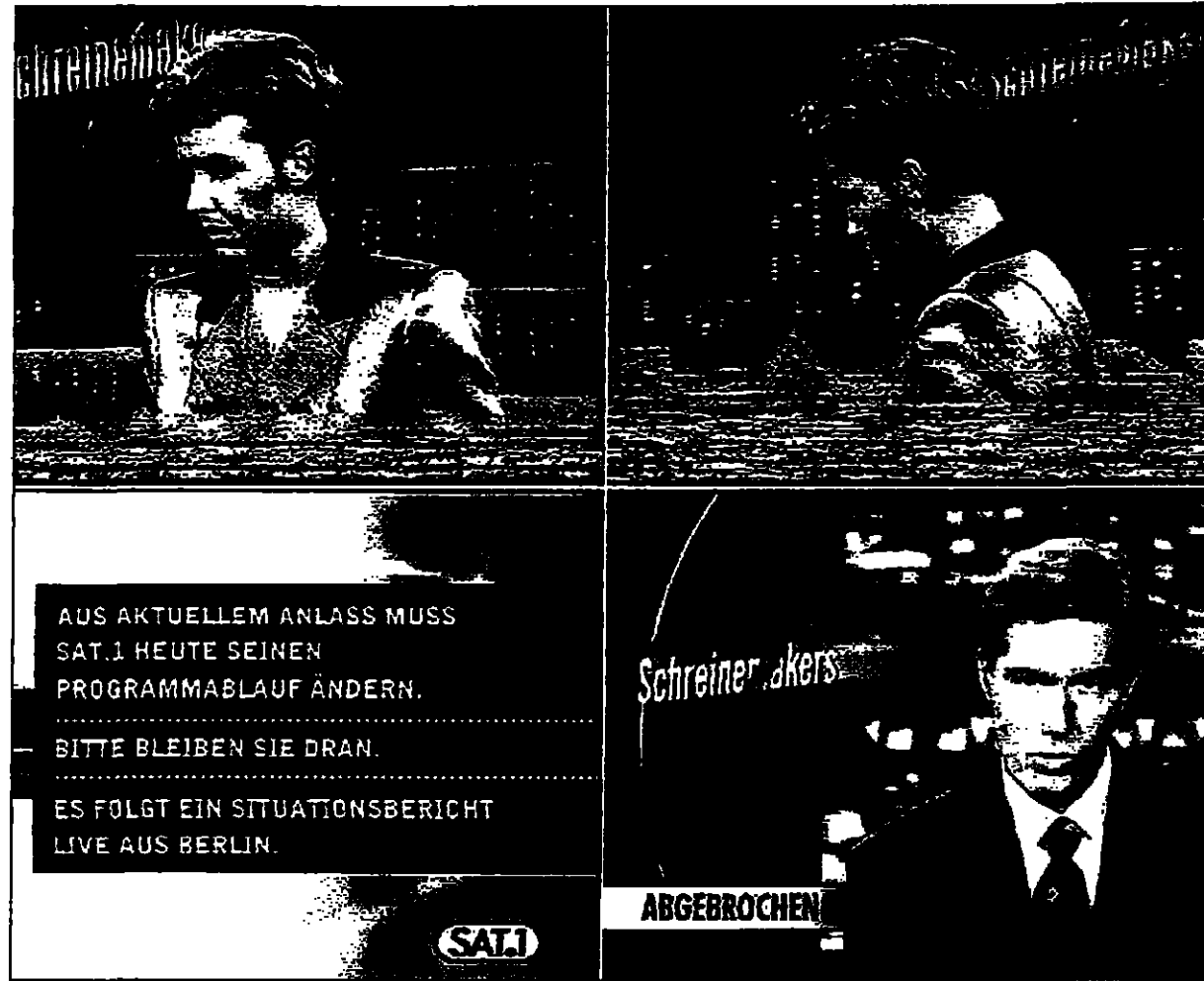
Whether you believe this explanation or not - and most Germans, including Mrs Waigel, do not - Schreinemakers seems convinced that she is the victim of a vendetta.

Nearly half of Germans surveyed yesterday told the Forsa

polling institute that the public squabbling over her tax troubles has damaged Schreinemakers' image.

"Schreinemakers' Live has always had a high level of credibility, and I hope that any we may have lost will be restored," Schreinemakers said.

At the risk of rupturing her lucrative contract with SAT-1, last night she was due to appear on rival television network RTL. The subject of the programme? Schreinemakers' missing tax millions and the Finance Minister. RTL have promised to keep the show on air.



Disappearing act: SAT-1 pulls the plug on Margarethe Schreinemakers' live show on Thursday night

China picks endangered dolphin for HK symbol

STEPHEN VINES
Hong Kong

If symbolism tells us anything about the future of Hong Kong, the outlook is very disturbing. Earlier this week the committee responsible for the celebrations marking the resumption of Chinese sovereignty over the colony next year decided its symbol would be the Chinese white dolphin. The committee seemed unaware this species was threatened with extinction in Chinese waters by the end of the century.

The committee also decided to place this alongside a new symbol for the future Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong - the Bauhinia flower, which the writer Jan Morris once described as "a sterile hybrid which produces no seed".

So Hong Kong will march into the future under the symbols of an endangered species and sterility.

The fate of the white dolphin is poignant. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature, only 80 are left in the waters around Hong Kong. Their extinction is being hastened by vessels entering the bustling container ports and killing them, and by the destruction of their habitat during the construction of the territory's new airport.

"If nothing is done to save them," says Alex Yau of the WWF, "the species cannot go on for more than three years."

The committee preparing the celebrations seems oblivious to this. Its convenor, Raymond Wu, believes the friendly dolphin will appeal to everybody, especially children. Its leaping movement, he says, symbolises Hong Kong's vibrancy.

The sterile Bauhinia became Hong Kong's national flower during the colonial period. It will replace the royal crest and other imperial symbols which still litter the colony.

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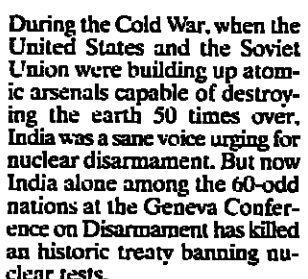
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How land of Gandhi came to love the bomb



Deve Gowda: Preoccupied

During the Cold War, when the United States and the Soviet Union were building up atomic arsenals capable of destroying the earth 50 times over, India was a sane voice urging for nuclear disarmament. But now India alone among the 60-odd nations at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament has killed an historic treaty banning nuclear tests.

Has India veered so far from its Gandhian principles of non-violence? Under Kumar Gujral, the Indian foreign minister, says not. The Geneva pact, which had taken over two years of debates, haggling and compromise painfully to construct, was, in Mr Gujral's words, a "flawed text". He added: "It is a sad fact that the nuclear weapon states show no interest in giving up their nuclear hegemony."

India's motives in blocking the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are twofold: altruistic and selfish. First, its Geneva negotiators argued that the pact does not go far enough down the road to free the world from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. The treaty is flawed, according to New Delhi, as it fails to stop the existing nuclear powers - Britain, China, the US, Russia and France - from either dismantling their arsenals or inventing new weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, insist the Indians, the treaty would leave the country vulnerable to a possible nuclear attack from its occasionally hostile neighbours, Pakistan and China.

Military experts estimate that China has over 200 nuclear warheads, while Pakistan is advanced in the development of its own nuclear programme and may have clandestinely exploded a device several years

Tim McGirk on New Delhi's opposition to an all-out test ban

ago at Lop Nor, the Chinese test site.

With the CTBT in force, India would be unable to test new devices, locking China into a dangerous position of superiority, according to diplomats in New Delhi.

"We cannot accept constraints on our option as long as nuclear weapon states continue to rely on their nuclear arsenal for security," said the Indian foreign minister. However, billions of extra pounds must be siphoned off development projects for India to even attempt to catch up with China's more advanced nuclear programme.

In India, the debate over the test ban treaty has aroused old nationalist and anti-colonial sentiment. Often in the Indian press, the treaty has been portrayed as a clever dodge by the superpowers to keep developing nations such as India out of the elite nuclear club.

India's recently elected Prime Minister, Deve Gowda, is preoccupied with trying to keep his fragile coalition government of leftist and regional parties from becoming unglued, and if he were to reverse India's opposition to the CTBT, it might lead to his demise. From the communists across the spectrum to the right-wing Hindus, all political parties are united against the test ban treaty. They tend to see themselves as David standing up to the nuclear Goliaths.

As one Indian defence expert, Jasjit Singh wrote recently: "Why is it unrealistic to expect firm movement towards disarmament? What is the rationale for this, for example, to continue maintaining a more modern arsenal, and against what threat?"

India's refusal has also brought sharp words from Washington, which backed, making the New Delhi government all the more obstinately opposed to the treaty. The Clinton Administration moved to ease the growing rift with India.

A State Department spokesman on Thursday assured India that "This is not about punishment, and the objective is not looking at the ways we can strong-arm India. We prefer to try to convince the Indians of why it is in their interests to support the text."

Defenders of the test ban treaty, inside India and out, argue that India's veto could brake the momentum among countries to press on with nuclear disarmament. Even if the CTBT draft is sent on to the UN General Assembly, without Geneva's seal of approval it may become so scissored and altered with amendments as to become meaningless.

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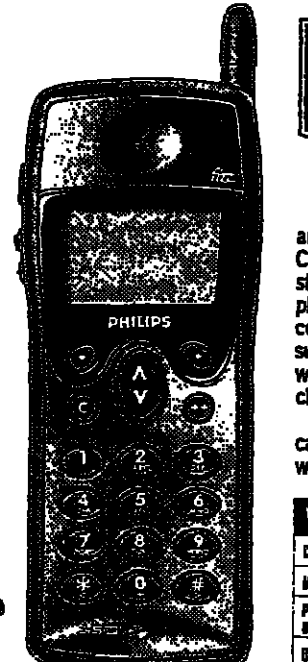


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George Samways

Jack Adrian
George Richmond Samways, writer: born Kingsclere, Hampshire 14 January 1895; married 1917 Helene Logan (one son, one daughter), 1958 Olive Field; died 8 August 1996.



Murray's other movies include Howard Hawks's screwball comedy *Man's Favourite Sport?* (1964) with Rock Hudson, the western romp *Did You Hear the One About the Traveling Saleslady?* (1968) with Phyl-

Ruari McLean
Roberts (Robin) Lewis Campbell
Lorimer, publisher, born Glasgow
1918; married (one son, four
daughters); died Strathmummel by
Pitlochry 22 August 1996.

always friendly, and I remember demonstrating our W1 Engine to H.S. (later Lord) Hives in 1941, when he was evidently very impressed. Unfortunately there was a delay in following up this demonstration as Rolls-Royce's Derby factory was bombed and top priority was to restore production of Merlin Engines. However, when Rolls-Royce did take over the Rover factories at Barnoldswick and Clitheroe in 1943, we began to make increasingly rapid progress.

Anthony Furse mentioned Whittle's claimed addition to benzadrine. This was freely

TODAY
National Gallery: Rachel Barnes.
August People (iv): Raphael, *Pope Julius II*, 12pm.
Late Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, *Adam's Apple: picturing the painting's genesis*, 1pm.
British Museum: Paul Collins, *Animals in Near Eastern Art*, 1.15pm.

TOMORROW
Late Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, *Art which Satirises Art?*, 2.30pm.

The *Faith Times* (which saw early on the way the wind was blowing) has heard of a move by the Roman Catholic Church to reclaim any churches built before the English Reformation. The Pope is said to be working through Prince William's Roman Catholic wife.

Let's turn up support for our national voice

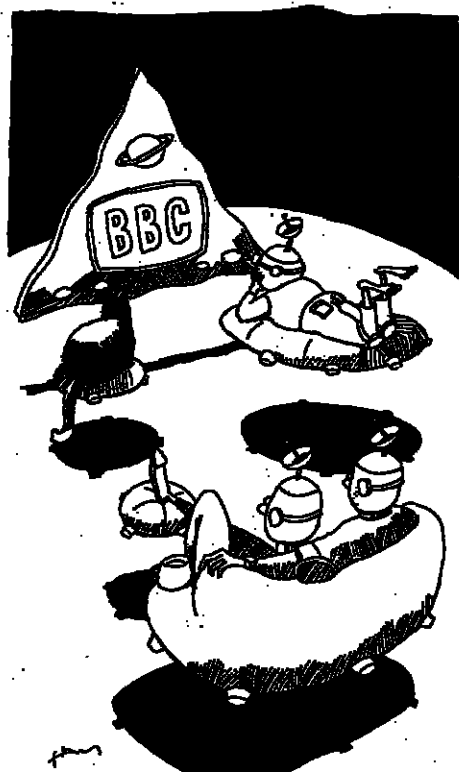
The BBC's director-general yesterday lodged a bid for an inflation-busting increase in the licence fee. It is the BBC's oxygen as a public service broadcaster. However enterprising it has become in marketing its programmes, that must remain so. The fee rose in April, in line with inflation – it is now £89.50. But the BBC now wants a one-off hike. This will provoke protests, it will be regressive, it will be condemned by lobbyists, MPs and newspapers. But John Birt is right. Any government that cares about the integrity of the United Kingdom, that values the place of Britain in the world, that has any concern for the mind and spirit of this country – especially any government that wears the label Conservative – ought to respond with an enthusiastic affirmative. Where the Tories lead, Labour would have to follow: together they could face down the objections of self-interested BBC knockers in the press. To raise the licence fee need have no electoral downside. It should be done at once.

The BBC's case has two legs. One is that convincing efforts have been made to improve the financial management of this unwieldy but immensely creative corporation. The Government recently accepted this when it agreed the renewal of the BBC's Charter and Licence. Now it needs to ensure that the more effective structure of resource allocation can

fulfil its basic corporate purposes in changing cultural and technological circumstances – and if that sounds too much like the puffy corporate-speak John Birt has become synonymous with, it should not dismay a government which has itself spent untold millions of pounds of public money on attempting to do in Whitehall and local government what Mr Birt has been about in Portland Place and Wood Lane. A significant increase in the licence fee together with a commitment to maintain its real value is the least the Government can do to reward the BBC's success and prime it for the competition to come.

It is already here. The second part of the BBC's argument looks forward to a new era. The success of the global players, notably Rupert Murdoch, is attested by the profit figures for Sky Broadcasting announced this week. Mr Murdoch's bid to monopolise digital broadcasting by satellite is a tribute to his brilliant gamesmanship with regulatory regimes. It is also a public menace. Mr Birt has seemed at times uncertain – does he fear or admire Murdoch? He needs to be clear. Murdoch is the BBC's enemy, grappling with him is to fight the good fight.

Certainly it is hopelessly fatalistic to say that because there are trends towards concentration and world scale in the way the enter-



tainment and news media operate that national broadcasting is finished. Tell that to the French. The position of the BBC as a player in the English language markets – albeit a marginal one compared with the Americans – can be consolidated. But to prosper abroad the BBC needs to be secure at home. That security does not mean aping Sky. It means carrying on what the BBC does so well, when it can plan ahead and take risks – making exciting programmes capturing life in modern Britain that people will watch. That is expensive, as the recent crazy arithmetic of league football transfers shows.

No one has to endorse all that Mr Birt has been up to as director-general. No one, likewise, can pretend that the search for savings in the BBC's budget can have come to an end (especially in television). Large amounts of money are still wasted and the BBC still does certain things badly (local radio is the most conspicuous example) and should give up. But the particularity and the peculiarity of the BBC deserve praise, not condemnation. Mr Birt needs to see that too much rationalisation may damage its idiosyncratic culture. Name the last good programme an accountant made.

The BBC stands on the narrow, insecure ground of an odd sales tax. Yet the licence fee provokes amazingly little resistance compared

with other taxes. A round fee of £100 would represent a once-and-for-all rise of just over £10. Such a sum (about £210m extra) would see the BBC into the new century, and digital broadcasting, with some style. Because the fee is regressive there is concern about its impact on lower-income groups who, heavy television watchers, are not always watching *Newsnight*. But the BBC's prosperity and creativity of course do not just benefit those watching or listening to its programmes. Sky News is kept honest by the existence of high-grade BBC and, to a lesser extent, ITN bulletins.

Mr Birt was speaking in Edinburgh, yet he made little of the BBC's appeal in an age when the integrity of the United Kingdom is in play. The *Six O'Clock News*, like *Match of the Day* and *Byker Grove* are watched north and south. Entertainment is not by itself social cement but the BBC undoubtedly does provide a general and national frame of reference. Watching the same BBC programmes at the same time is part and parcel of what in a fissiparous world it is to be British. We are, as a nation, bounded and defined by our national conversations; such conversation is unthinkable without the BBC. And that, in the end, is the strongest reason to back Mr Birt in his campaign.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Elect a Scottish House of Lords and save the Union

Sir: Why not combine the establishment of a Scottish Parliament with reform of the House of Lords (leading article, 21 August), by creating a new Upper House for Scotland, (and maybe one each for Wales and Northern Ireland)?

The House of Commons can continue as now – avoiding the Lothian question.

A new elected Scottish Upper House could: replace the House of Lords as the highest court of appeal for Scotland; review all measures passed by the House of Commons in so far as they concern Scotland, and recommend amendments (as does the present House of Lords for all House of Commons Bills); pass measures of concern to purely

Scottish institutions, including the Scottish legal system, Scottish education, Scottish local government, transport, tourism and economic development; scrutinise the Scottish Office and call to account the Secretary of State and Scottish Office ministers; have representation at the EU in Brussels.

Like the existing House of Lords it would have no financial powers. Even so it would be a much more powerful and effective body than that proposed by Labour, being concerned with all aspects of Scottish life. This seems a solution that will meet the legitimate aspirations of the majority of Scots. It does not destroy the Union.

J MICHAEL CRAIG
Kirkcubright, Galloway

Sir: I share your desire for full-scale reform of the British constitution including the written and unwritten, the efficient and the ceremonial. The House of Lords, however, is only one component of the whole and there are great dangers in treating it in isolation.

The elected chamber is just as much in need of reform. The same is true of the relationships between central and regional or local government. There are also the ever-increasing quangos, many of which escape real accountability and democratic policy-making. Full and participating citizenship is another issue to be addressed.

Many interests will need to be consulted, in particular the Crown

(which is already taking thought for the future) and the judiciary (where improvements in both civil and criminal procedures are much needed).

It seems that only a well-staffed Royal Commission, taking five or more years, is likely to succeed in handling the complexity and in preserving the necessary balance. Quick fixes based on party ideology or advantage are above all to be avoided. It will be worth taking enough time and serious thought in order to evolve a constitution adequate to the needs of this country in the 21st century.

LORD HYLTON
House of Lords
London SW1

Martian microbe in the soup

Sir: N C Wickramasinghe (letter, 20 August) claims that the discovery of microbial forms in the Arctic Martian meteorite vindicates panspermia, and rules out the Earth-centred primordial soup.

With respect to him, this is not so. In chapter 15 of Carl Sagan and Joseph Shklovskii's *Intelligent Life in the Universe*, the essential difficulty for the panspermia hypothesis is identified. If the pressure of sunlight on a biological particle is sufficient to exceed the force of gravity and drive the particle away from its own star, it will drive it away from any similar star, and hence the particle may never come to rest in a compatible environment.

LETTER from THE EDITOR

It has not been a good week for people who regard literature as a cadet branch of religion; a scrappy argument over whether or not Shakespeare was responsible for a second-rate anti-Scottish play was followed by revelations of TS Eliot's impossibly juvenile, smutty and racist "hidden verse". After leaving through them trying to find something which gave an accurate flavour but was publishable (just) I can confirm that these Eliot verses are not earthy, humane bawdry, such as Burns produced, nor erotic. From the man who seemed in his later years to be a kind of lay archbishop, they are dreary smut.

I enjoy his "Four Quartets" but I've always thought Eliot an unwholesome prig and am therefore delighted to find my prejudices bolstered. Though an immensely talented and adventurous writer, he seems to me to be responsible for much that is worst about 20th-century English poetry.

His daily referential technique – "it's all in the footnotes; and if you haven't read your Donne my writing isn't for you" – was decadent and parasitical (those words being used properly and not merely as abuse), and designed to keep out most intelligent readers. This poetry-as-sacrament encouraged endless bores to write poetry about poetry for students. Give me Yeats or Auden any day.

Eliot helped exile poetry from public affairs and the national conversation. Something which had been an important part of national life during the lifetimes of Dryden, Pope, Byron, Browning, Kipling and the War poets retreated muttering into its private backwaters. In recent decades, admittedly, poetry has been slowly returning. But we are still not at the stage where a newspaper such as *The Independent* turns naturally to a major poet to describe or discuss some recent event. Where are our Drydens?

I have discovered the ordinary French on holiday, and they are just like us. They dress badly, their children howl, and they are all overweight

ing with superb hauteur. The men are wiry and expressionless and possess, almost certainly, deeply philosophical minds. They are quite capable of sneering while fast asleep at the occasional passing British family. We Brits, admittedly, can be spotted a mile off – white, clumsy, embarrassed, wholly unchic. But now I have discovered where the ordinary French go. And... wait for it... they are just like us! They dress badly, sport horrible sunburn and chat cheerily to strangers. Their children howl, they build elaborate sand-castles and they are all overweight. Finding this out was the most cheering holiday discovery for many years.

Coming home, though, I had had one further morale-booster. Heading for the office yesterday, I was stopped on the stairs by my four-year-old daughter, Isabel. "Daddy," she asked, "why do you always smell of champagne?" I suspect she meant afterwards, but it made me feel better all day.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Every day I was reliving the hours I spent with that madman. He was reliving the rape moment by moment – woman who had to endure six days of questioning in court by the man who had raped her

It can be dangerous to have a dog nowadays. If it barks at a passer-by who then reports you, you can end up with a criminal record – Dr Roger Magford, head of the Animal Behaviour Centre, Chertsey, Surrey

I often wonder why I joined the Tories. Labour politicians tend to be nicer blokes. They believe in something – Sir Teddy Taylor, Conservative MP

I think we have to accept that they have become completely paranoid on this subject and are beyond reasonable argument – Francis Anthony, British Veterinary Association's chief expert on BSE, on Germans avoiding lamb

No coronets and ermine will cover up their roles in dragging British politics lower than the gutter – Frank Dobson, Labour MP, on Maurice Saatchi and Peter Gummer being made life peers

Howard plays the 'serfdom' card

Sir: I find the news that some Tory MPs want the new plastic national identity card/driving licence to be made compulsory highly ironic.

I vividly remember the patriotic clamour raised by Churchill's Conservative Party of the late 1940s against the retention of wartime national identity cards as a bureaucratic badge of "socialist serfdom".

Doubtless their successors of today will claim that times have changed for the worse, thanks to the legacy of the "permissive Sixties". Nothing whatever to do with the past 17 years of Tory government, of course.

So we are to have CS gas-spraying policemen today, plastic identities tomorrow, and what next? The abolition of trial by jury?

A nation at ease with itself?

A E G WRIGHT
London NW2

Sir: At last we may be getting a national identity card – if we want one.

If this nadir of taste and design is Mr Howard's best effort he can forget it. I cannot believe that any minister can be so foolish as to put a Union Flag on a document. The idiot's guide to national identity; it looks like something out of the Carnaby Street of the 1970s. If the card has to carry a national symbol what is wrong with the Royal coat of arms that brings a touch of gravitas to our passports?

M R ROMANS
Tisbury, Wiltshire

Deaths in police custody tragic but rare

Sir: Paul Donovan's article "Stoking the fires of resentment" (21 August) does just that. A more balanced view is presented in the report, initiated by the Community-Police Consultative Group for Lambeth into deaths in custody, which puts the problem into perspective.

One death in custody is one too many but your article states that over the past 10 years there have been 576 deaths in custody. However, it does not, as the Lambeth report does, detail the many different circumstances which may be classed as a death in custody, for example if police are called to an address where the individual is already unconscious and subsequently dies en route to hospital, this is classed as a death in custody.

The Lambeth report, entitled *Lessons from Tragedies*, states: "Very few [people] die as a result of being detained in police custody after an arrest in violent circumstances. There is invariably greater publicity where this does occur, and we acknowledge the widespread perception that the number of deaths is far greater than the reporting suggests."

The assertion that the issue of



At the right place: Opera-goers outside the Festspielhaus

Photograph: Sue Adler

Confused scramble for Ringside seats at Bayreuth

Sir: How pleasant to see a colour interior of the magnificent 1748 Bayreuth Festspielhaus built by the Margravine Wilhelmine, composer and sister to Frederick the Great, albeit illustrating an article (22 August) on attending the *arriviste* Festspielhaus of 1876 on top of the hill.

If John Walsh knows how to get tickets for the annual half-dozen performances at the Margravine's Festspielhaus, generally of Mozart given by the Bayerische Staatsoper, please let me know. It is said that a

formidable lady retreats each year to an upper room bearing all the applications and descends after three days with the names of the elect. I have never made the cut.

IAIN MACKINTOSH
Theatre Projects Consultants
London NW5

Sir: The German lady sitting next to John Walsh on the plane to Bayreuth would have been even more astonished by his possession of a ticket to the Wagner Festival if she

had read the resulting article. Walsh doesn't even bother to tell us which opera he saw, preferring to pad out his article with gibes about the audience (who, judging from his transcription of their notices requesting tickets, don't appear to be able to spell their own language). Next time please don't waste the ticket – I can tell one Ring opera from another and would be willing to report back on the experience.

CAROLYN LARRINGTON
De Montfort University, Leicester

Indonesia denies misuse of Hawks

Sir: The Indonesian government regards the acquittal of four women, charged with damaging a British Aerospace Hawk destined for Indonesia as a domestic affair of the UK and respects the verdict of the jury at Liverpool Crown Court (report, 31 July).

However, their argument that the Hawk would be used to attack unarmed civilians in East Timor is unfounded. The purchase of BAC's Hawk jets by the Indonesian government satisfies the conditions set by the two parties. The Indonesian government has never, and will never, use the Hawks to suppress the East Timorese. Assurances of this have been given to the British government. The British government has found no evidence that the Hawks were being used in contravention of such assurances.

HARRY P HARYONO
Minister Counsellor
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia
London W1

Sweetness and pain of elusive memories

Sir: Frederick Raphael writes (20 August): "The sweetness of nostalgia is sharpened by its pain."

Perhaps a different sensation arises when, unlike the contributors to "Our little trips down memory lane", we are unable to identify exactly what it is we are recalling when pricked by a smell or a taste.

Frederick Raphael's piece and the accompanying recollections bring to mind Edward Thomas's poem "Old Man" (referring to the pungent herb also known as lad's love and southernwood), in which he writes of having "mislead the key":

"I, too, often shrivel the grey shreds, Sniff them and think and sniff again and try

Once more to think what it is I am remembering.

Always in vain..."

and is left with "Only an avenue, dark, nameless, without end"

R ETTY
Louth, Lincolnshire

A generation on the margins of politics

Sir: The TUC's report on young workers confirms some of the findings of recent Industrial Society research ("Only two in five of young plan to vote", 22 August). While young people are often hopeful about their own prospects, they are pessimistic about the future for young people generally. "Thatcher's children" – despite their focus on individual needs – have a strong sense of collective responsibilities and shared values. There is a high level of concern about crime, work opportunities and the environment.

But the suggestion that only two in five young workers are likely to vote in the next election is deeply worrying. Today's young people are tomorrow's employees, managers, entrepreneurs, community leaders and parents. They need to feel that they can influence policy making. We risk building a society of marginalised, cynical people who feel their energy and talents may go unused and unrewarded.

JO GARDINER
Campaign Manager
The Industrial Society
London W1

the saturday story

Stormy past of the Windy City



In 1968, the Democrats convened in Chicago, which rapidly took on the appearance of a battle zone. This year, they're braving it again. Godfrey Hodgson looks back

Next week, America's Democratic party returns to Chicago for the first time since 1968. It is a brave decision, because the capital of Middle America is the natural place for the Democrats to nominate Bill Clinton as their champion for a second time.

The reason for waiting 28 years to come back is compelling. I witnessed the last Democratic convention in Chicago as a reporter. It was an unmitigated disaster. Wild demonstrations in the streets, and the city police's savage reprisals, all faithfully reported on television, disillusioned some of the left-wing of the party with orthodox politics.

It symbolised the frustration over the Vietnam war and over the condition of black Americans. In the end, it drove a minority into the desperate terrorist activities of white Weathermen ("You don't need a Weatherman to tell you which way the wind blows") and the Black Panthers.

But even for the less extreme members of a whole generation – for President Clinton's generation – the ferocity with which Mayor Richard Daley's beefy policemen tucked into students demonstrating for peace in Vietnam asked hard questions about the nature of American society.

Now, at long last, the Democrats have decided they can put those divisions behind them. The healing is symbolised by the presence on the same platform next week of Tom Hayden and Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley. Daley is the son of Mayor Richard J. Daley, who presided over what Hayden's friends in 1968 called "pig city". Hayden was sentenced to 14 months and 14 days for contempt.

The system is collapsing, he told the judge. "Oh, don't be so pessimistic!" was the reply. "Follow as smart as you could do awfully well under the system". And he has. Divorced from Jane Fonda (herself a

radical at the time), he has been a member of the California legislature for 14 years. Next week, he will be back in Chicago – as a delegate.

The Chicago convention was a turning point, and not just for the far left. It guaranteed the defeat of the Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphrey and, therefore, the election of Richard Nixon. It ended a Democratic monopoly of the presidency broken only by the grandfatherly and largely non-partisan figure of General Eisenhower since 1933 – or as long as anyone below late middle-age could remember.

Now, looking back almost 30 years later, in fact, you could say that August 1968 was the moment when it became apparent that the Democratic party had finally fallen apart. It revealed the bitter hostility dividing working-class traditionalists who followed Lyndon Johnson and vice-president Humphrey from the middle-class idealists who followed Senator Eugene McCarthy.

Johnson became president as a result of John F. Kennedy's assassination in 1963, and he won the presidency in his own right largely by painting his Republican opponent in 1964 as a warmonger. Although Johnson had an impressive record as a domestic reformer, passing a historic

Civil Rights Act in 1964, liberals became deeply disillusioned with him when, in 1965, he sharply increased the American commitment to the war against the communist guerrillas in Vietnam.

By the beginning of 1968, the country was in a strange mood. Although segregation had been abolished peacefully in the South, hundreds of cities in the North and West had been disrupted by rioting. Universities were in turmoil, and parents and children quarrelled bitterly over the war.

In March, to everyone's astonishment, President Johnson, who had seemed nerveless and implacable, suddenly announced that he would not run for a second term. The stage was set for an unprecedented insurgency.

Two peace candidates – first, Senator Eugene McCarthy, an enigmatic Mid-western Catholic intellectual, then Senator Robert Kennedy – took on President Johnson, then, after Johnson's withdrawal, his successor Hubert Humphrey. In the moment of his victory in the last and biggest primary, in California, Robert Kennedy was assassinated. The Democratic campaign had become a passionate, unpredictable civil war.

So when the Democrats converged on Chicago for what had been choreographed as a coronation of President Johnson, the atmosphere was feverish. Hundreds of young volunteers, each more passionately committed to the peace cause than the next, had come to the city to work and demonstrate for their candidate. But the convention, and the city, were ruled with a rod of iron by the last of the great Democratic city bosses – the terrifying Mayor Daley.

"His Honour" Daley, as he liked to be known, was absolutely determined that Humphrey would be nominated, and so he was – by 1,760 votes to McCarthy's 601. But he was also intent on teaching "the kids" a lesson. They represented everything an elderly working-class Irish Catholic politician of the old school found most repellent. They were idealistic, highly educated and in the main upper middle class. They had dared to defy the old Democratic party of the machines and the unions. Worst of all, they appeared to be unpatriotic.

It is not clear how many of the various stories that circulated about the demonstrators Daley really believed. McCarthy supporters said the Mayor's men planned to throw

cellophane bags of urine and excrement at the police. Sticks, Molotov cocktails and cherry bombs were solemnly displayed at police headquarters as the weapons the revolutionaries planned to use. It was solemnly said the peacekeepers had brought black widow spiders to Chicago to put in the cans of innocent citizens, and Daley at one point actually alleged there was a plot to assassinate Hubert Humphrey and even – ultimate tenuity – to do away with "His Honour" himself.

It was odd that none of the 6,300 reporters in town claimed to have seen any of these weapons used. What reporters did see, and I was one of them, was many of the 12,000 Chicago police go completely berserk. Even Mayor Daley's own official report found evidence of "unrestrained and indiscriminate police violence" and of "what can only be called a police riot".

The police weighed in to demonstrators with a savagery I had never seen before. On one occasion, I saw a policeman hurl a young woman bodily through a plate-glass window. There was nothing partisan about the astonishment the police behaviour caused. At different times in the evening, I patrolled the mayhem in the company of Max Hastings, now edi-

tor of the *London Evening Standard*, and Winston Churchill, now an MP.

The demonstrators set up volunteer first-aid posts to treat some 600 victims of police assault. About one-third had head injuries; caused by police truncheons, while one-fifth had injuries in the lower abdomen or genitals caused by being prodded by police night-sticks or kicked by police boots.

Mike Royko, beloved columnist of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, summed up the stunned feelings of citizens and visitors alike the day after the convention. The city had come to a pretty pass, he suggested, when so many Chicagoans were going around smashing policemen in their knuckles with their chins.

The initial response of the great majority of journalists to what had happened in Chicago was the same as Royko's – to see the police as the villains and the demonstrators as the victims. The truth was, said a future editor of the *New York Times*, "these were our children in the streets, and the Chicago police beat them up". The *Washington Post*, in the same vein, printed a column which compared Mayor Daley with the gangland boss in Bertold Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*.

Within days, the atmosphere had changed. Editors and television producers found to their amazement that for tens of millions of inhabitants of what Richard Nixon was to call "the silent majority", it was the demonstrators who were the villains, and the policemen the heroes. Even the liberal *Washington Post* explained that of course policemen could be expected to club young men wearing beards, which provoked a notably concise letter from a reader: "Dear Sir, What about Lincoln? What about Moses? What about God?"

The tide nonetheless had turned. With Richard Nixon in the White House and his campaign manager,

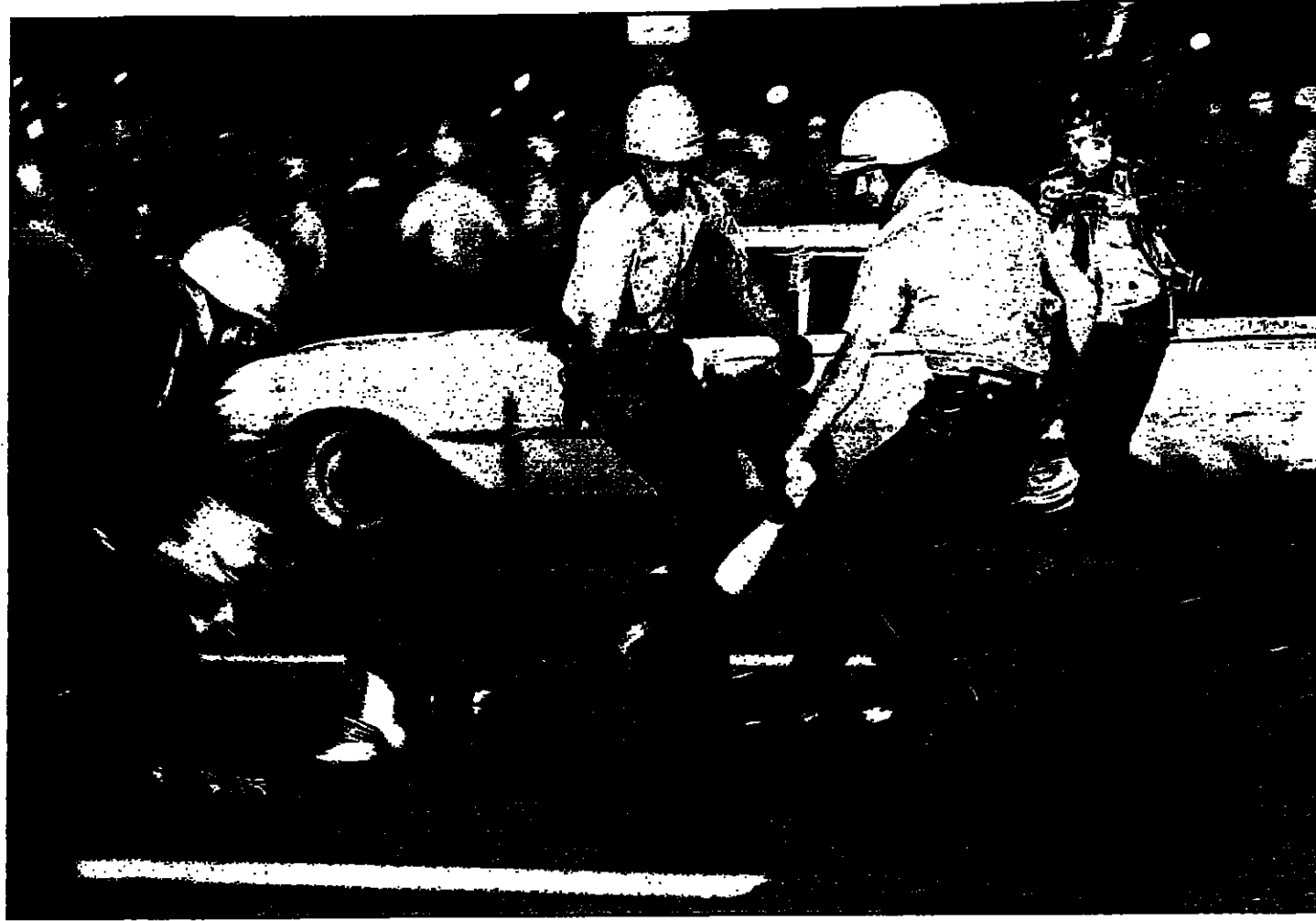
John Mitchell (later ironically jailed himself for his part in Watergate crimes), seven of the radical leaders who had helped to organise the demonstrations in Chicago were put on trial, with Bobby Seale of the Black Panthers, whom they hardly knew, for conspiracy.

The trial of the Chicago Seven was a sinister farce. The judge, Julius Hoffman, hectoring and bullied the defendants, and the defendants, especially the political buffoon Abbie Hoffman, behaved outrageously in their turn.

Young people everywhere were already in a ferment of rebellion. In Paris, they had boiled over in the "events" of May 1968. In Berlin, Rudi Dutschke's followers pelted the police with contraceptive pills as a none-too-subtle hint that their violence resulted from sexual frustration. In London, the climax came with the violent anti-Vietnam demonstration outside the American embassy in Grosvenor Square in 1970.

The world woke up to the existence of another unexpected American political tradition – a traditional of radical populist moralism which had always been there. The irony is that it did so at the very moment when that tradition was going underground again.

What it took the world longer to notice was that the Chicago convention and the trial of the Chicago Seven were the last kicks of a subsiding movement. For the moment, the future lay not with the young radicals, but with Richard Nixon and then with the conservatives. But 28 years on, Bill Clinton can go to Chicago as one of the big winners: those Democrats who were able to transform the idealism of the 1960s into practical politics. In the perverse way that history works, the losers of 1968 may yet have their turn again.

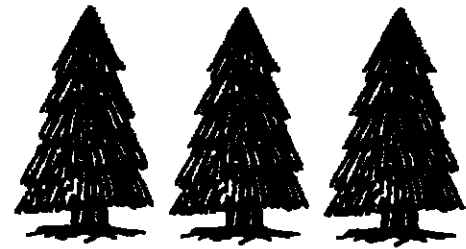


Above: police beat up protesters during riots in Chicago in 1968. From left, Richard Nixon, who won the election, and leading rebels Abbie Hoffman and Tom Hayden, with Jane Fonda

Main photograph: Magnum



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Jo Brand's week



I'm up in Edinburgh for a few days at the Festival. I'm glad to report it's still the same sweaty, drunken, competitive, paranoid, uncontrolled mess for most comers that it always was. This week is completely soaked with Perrier award madness, with the six contenders' hearts beginning to beat faster as their own little Armageddon approaches. It's a difficult time for them because everyone talks so much bullshit to you about it. When I was nominated some years ago, many people told me I had it in the bag from the January of that year, before I'd even written enough jokes. As the witching hour approached on the Saturday night I found myself doing a radio show, and asked someone to phone me and put me out of my misery as soon as the result was announced at midnight. Midnight came and went and eventually a fax plopped into the studio half an hour later saying that Steve Coogan and John Thomson had won. You can be damn sure the bastards would have phoned me if I'd won. The five of us, fated for three short days and all having had our photos taken clutching the prize to save the press time, were dropped like stones. Still, one consolation. Six months later, nobody could remember who'd won it.

Many people in this country are glib and not very imaginative, which may explain why telephone joke lines have become so popular. With these joke lines, you give someone a number and when they phone up they hear a very funny sound scenario, which means you don't have to think it up yourself. Unfortunately though, some of these joke lines have fooled people into thinking they are the genuine article. Hence a woman collapsed after hearing what she thought was a man swerving off the road and crashing, and some bloke was persuaded to believe his missus was having an affair. The law states that these lines must say they are only joke lines, but of course many people hang up before they get to that bit.

I think it's really sad that we've got to the point where we can't even be bothered to do our own wind-ups. Is there eventually going to be a service for every spontaneous facet of human life? As kids, my brothers and I had great fun playing jokes on people on the phone. We once phoned up a Mr Bastard in the phone book and asked for someone called Dave. When the man on the other end said, "There's no one here called Dave," we chorused, "Must be some other bastard, then" and hung up. Very childish, I admit, but we did think it up on our own.

My agent got a very 'polite' call from LIVE TV this week asking whether I would mind my name being used in an advertisement promoting their channel. The gist of the ad was a quiz using serious questions with very funny misplaced answers relating to the previous question, for example: "Whose ball skills were worth £15m?" Answer: "Pamela Anderson". The final question was: "Who is the most famous dog on TV?" Answer: "Jo Brand." Oh hilarity of hilarities. Still, it sums up the sophistication of a



An old dog

group of middle-aged, mediocre males, whose development seems to have been halted round about the age of seven. I'd like to add a few more Ms to Janet Street-Porter's competent assessment of the people in jobs with companies like LIVE TV: morose, masturbatory and more putrid than a sackful of old sprouts. I did actually give my permission, because I hope a lot of people will be put off by it, and as for those three that aren't, they can join the other two LIVE TV viewers.

So I'm a dog, but poor old Tony Blair is the devil himself. Not only that, but the creators of this sophisticated campaign have been rewarded with a peerage. Apparently the outraged Labour reaction to John Major's sanctioning of the work of these herbivores has elicited the words, "This is a disgusting slur", from the Saatchi firm. Oh dear, I think a bit of pot and kettle, going on here. Of course, the Labour party couldn't have used the demon eyes on John Redwood or Michael Portillo, because no one would have noticed the difference.

The poor old 'Mail On Sunday' is trying to track down my dad. They rather sneakily phoned my mum without saying who they were, but she had the nous, when asked where my father could be contacted, to ask who was calling. The *Mail On Sunday* has heard my dad doesn't like my act and, not content with having done a

demolition job on me themselves, seem to like the idea of him joining the fray. It has to be said that certain bits of my act are not to his taste, but fortunately for me and sadly for the *MOS* my dad – unlike some people in this country who will sell their nearest and dearest down the river – is loyal and not malicious. So yeh, boo, sucks to that particular Tony rag.

Britons are under more stress at work. They work longer hours for less pay and are much more knackered than they used to be, says a recent study. I would have thought that it was easy to tell that just by looking at people on the street. Everyone looks completely shattered and in need of a good night's sleep. This is because the people who have actually got jobs are so desperate to hold on to them that they work longer hours, cover for workmates who are sick and generally let themselves be treated like dirt.

The Tories, sadly, have clearly done a good PR job on how appalling the unions are: in the study, only 2 per cent of those under 25 thought the union was worth consulting about difficulties at work. More fool them.



Michael Portillo: demon in disguise

صكزا من الاصل

The Independent Weekend

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The decade that taste remembered

Friday night. A velvet banquet. Three young women in flares and cheesecloth tie-front shirts shout excitedly into each other's ears. From the doorway leading to the third arch thunders "Dancing Queen", only you can't hear Annifrid and Agnetha because everyone, but everyone, is singing along as loudly as their dance-warmed lungs will allow. Rushing through the gloom comes a fourth girl, a grin plastered over her face. "Oooh!" she squeals. "A young man just asked me to dance!" "Oooh!" shout her friends in return. She staggers back onto her platform heels and wobbles away through the bar. Hooks up with a guy in a skin-tight picture shirt with a collar you could land planes on. They disappear into the mêlée.

This is Starsky and Hutch. It's a new kind of nightclub. Actually, it's a very old kind of nightclub, but it's new to a lot of the people there. After years in which the club scene consisted of people taking E going into the centre of their own head and nodding like a trauma victim for six, eight hours at a time, Starsky and Hutch is a breath of fresh air. It currently appears at four venues: Wednesdays and Thursdays at Ronnie Scott's in Soho, Fridays in the Arches, an old mushroom farm beneath the railway in Southwark, and Saturdays at Bagley's, behind King's Cross station. People dress up to come here; they chat each other up; they crowd round the bar; they talk to their mates; they know all the lyrics. And most of all, they give it welly with their hips.

That the Seventies are big business is hardly news: even *EastEnders* has caught up by allowing two of the cast's goofier characters to run Seventies nights. The Seventies — at least, the six years before everyone turned nihilistic — were a decade of almost unrestrained goofiness: industrial make-up, tank tops, Donny Osmond, Lurex, stupid shoes. My main memory of the Seventies is the lads at the village bus-stop in bottle-green baggies, stripe-knit sleeveless jerseys, feather haircuts and brown platform shoes. For some reason, they never wore socks. Their heels were always mired with blood. Platform shoes, you see, don't bend; and what doesn't move with the foot rubs it. Sticking-plaster shares boomed in the Seventies.

Seventies nights have hitherto concentrated on the camp aspects of the decade. This is where Starsky and Hutch is different. It acknowledges the era's other abiding obsession: cool. How anyone in a brown leatherette car-coat could ever have seen themselves as cool is one of nature's great anomalies, but somehow they did and somehow, they were. This was the era of *Blaxploitation*, of cool vibes and hot funk; of *The French Connection* and *Shaft*. It was an era when you

In different murky venues in London, they are tottering along on platform soles and in leatherette car-coats to dance their way back to the Seventies. This isn't a safe form of sado-masochism, this is Starsky and Hutch night, and it outcools cool. Photograph by Andrew Buurman

SERENA
MACKESY

In another life

could sing lyrics like "Baby take me/ high upon a hillside/ up to where the stallion meets the sun" and nobody would laugh; a feat Robbie Williams could only pull off by going for that archly raised eyebrow. It was also the era of great soul cops.

Soul cops are back with a bang. Vauxhall Almeida's advertising campaign features *Professionals* lookalikes driving the mean streets and talking in that wry monotone we loved. Bravo, the cable channel, has been running repeats of *Starsky and Hutch* since January. Now even the clothing companies are getting in on the act: Lee Originals are launching a 1970s denim range, and Farah are going one step further with replicas of that long-line, shawl-collared belted cardigan synonymous with Paul Michael Glaser. There was a time when all I wanted in the world was one of those. By the time my income caught up with my urges, the desire had faded.

All this is good news for Andy Georgiou, DJ and partner in the club. Andy, 34 in a couple of weeks, looks startlingly like Glaser, though his sartorial style runs more towards that of Huggy Bear, the pimp-informer played by Antonio Fargas and unsung star of the series. Hatted like Gilbert O'Sullivan and wrapped in white-rimmed shades, he cradles a bottle of mineral water and surveys his domain. For a London nightclub it is startlingly friendly: people barely out of school rub shoulders genially with people who obviously experienced the disco thing fully the first time round. Andy is obviously a very astute businessman, but even he's surprised by his success over the last couple of years.

"I was pretty shocked when it took off, because the age range is so diverse. Our oldest member

is 53 and our youngest is just over 18. I don't know if you noticed Simon Hayes? He's our local MP. He wants a membership. He's here with a local priest. The local licensing authority people are here as well. They're here on official business, but they're actually enjoying themselves for once."

By this time, a group of about 10 mates has crammed on to a bit of bench made for four to our right. They're laughing and joking, and the girls are wolf-whistling at a bashful-looking Adonis with a medallion. "You're making him shy," I say to the girl whose thigh is rubbing mine. "It's good for him," she says, "and anyway, you've got to give them some encouragement, haven't you? Oh! Gorgeous! Hello!" He smiles sheepishly and scuttles off to the safety of a trio of 6ft-tall sirens in negligees and Three Degrees wigs. It's like a very large college disco. Around 800 people are crammed into four arches, but you have the feeling that you probably know at least half of them.

Andy, the child of Greek Cypriot parents ("I'm another George Michael job, only from south London"), has had a circuitous route into club proprietorship, though some form of public exhibitionism was always on the cards. "I was London's youngest musical entertainer at two. In 1963 I was playing the guitar and singing, entertaining customers in shops with the Beatles classics. I made the *Evening Standard*. But that was where the musical career ended."

At 14, he was DJ-ing in his spare time, at parties first of all, then in clubs. Then he trained as an architect and set up in practice, designed a handful of nightclubs, including a private members' club, the Granaries, in Croydon. "It's still there. Doing very well." Like many young pro-

fessionals, he fell victim to the recession. It's a common theme of the Nineties, this: the country is bursting with thirtysomethings who treated the economic disaster as a chance to fulfil their secret dreams. "I sat fallow for about a year. Then I decided, well, there's got to be more to life than sitting around waiting for a job. So I put the DJ-ing back on the cards."

The business is a bit of a family affair: brother Kristos is a fellow DJ and designs the club's hyper-cool flyers, cousin Peter is a partner. A record — a version, what else, of the *Starsky and Hutch* theme — comes out in a month, and they've got plans to launch a radio station, Happy Radio, in May. And in October, hand in glove with Bravo, they take the Starsky and Hutch roadshow to Edinburgh, Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and finally back to London. Going with them will be that car, the Ford Torino that launched a million speed stripes. They first got hold of it for the launch of the re-run, and parked it in the Arches beneath a huge TV screen. "People were chuffed. The car, believe it or not, is probably more famous than anybody else. It was a huge sex symbol. Everybody wanted one."

And what's more, other original stars have started drifting in for a spot in the limelight as well. Andy and Kristos met Fargas on the *Big Breakfast*, where they had been drafted in, media-style, as "Starsky superfans". They palled up to the extent that the man even persuaded David Soul to pitch up one night. "Imagine it: car park, queue of people, a stretch limo pulls up and out pop David Soul and Huggy Bear. People reacted with complete gobsmacked amazement. They didn't believe their eyes. They thought they were lookalikes, but it didn't take two seconds to work out that they weren't."

Soul, he says, is a shy sort of bloke, Fargas the opposite. "That, for me, was the bubble that didn't burst. Sometimes you meet these people and think God, what a wanker, but he was charming and funny — exactly like Huggy Bear is but with none of the affiliated drug-and-pimp sort of image. The man drinks Kaliber Low Alcohol. He smokes cigars, but he doesn't do anything else that's naughty. I was really very amazed. He was 48-years-old and he looks 38 if that. He's hardly changed. He came into the country on the Sunday, I met him on the Monday, we went out Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night and I saw him off the night he went home." Cool.

For details of the tour, and of the Starsky and Hutch Fan Club, call 0171-208 7203.

'I'm not Egon Ronay!' I wanted to cry. 'I eat over the sink so I won't have to wash any dishes'

Last Saturday, instead of wiling away the hours trying to find enough change for another foul alcoholic imitation lemon drink with the girls in Camden's finest hell hole, I was in a five-star hotel in Ireland by myself. I was writing a travel piece, having begged the editor to "get me the hell out of London". When I got on the cocktail-sized Ryanair plane, I hadn't even bothered to find out where in Ireland I was going.

As it happens, I found myself in Dublin, met by a chauffeur. In the two-hour drive to the secret location, the nice man asked me a) if I wanted the air conditioning on ("yes, please"), b) did I want it off, now? ("yes, please"), c) did I know that Daniel Day-Lewis is a regular guest? ("ay carumba"). I hoped and prayed he would still be there or, if not, that there would

at least be some pregnant parlour maids to suggest that he had stayed recently.

We pulled up a winding drive to a vast stone house. It was, I'm certain, the mansion from *North by Northwest*. Beautiful and luxurious as my room was, I did sit up all night waiting for Martin Landau to burst in and pour a bottle of whiskey down my throat. It would make a change from Grace spilling Hooch on my dress. No such luck. And no Dan, unless he had cunningly disguised himself as a very elderly South African golfing enthusiast. I did get briefly excited when I discovered the Jack Nicholson Room. Surely, in there, I would find some girls my own age to talk to. But it was Jack Nicklaus, apparently a golfer of some repute. Don't worry, I don't know who Ruud Gullit is. But I like his name.

EMMA FORREST



Actually, I had a very nice time. I walked around the rose garden and rode horses and swam in a revolting pink one-piece that I had to buy because I left my Raquel Welch bikini at home. I had breakfast in bed and chocolates laid out on my pillow

at night. I painted my toenails and read Truman Capote. Even not being able to sleep was more relaxing than in London. Insomnia is more fun in a bedroom other than your own. And there were new, interesting things to scare me at night, such as creepy oil portraits of pale children in velvet gowns. And maple wardrobes. Wardrobes? Well, it seemed pretty spooky at the time. Until I imagined it was Daniel Day-Lewis researching his role as a wardrobe in an upcoming Michael Mann movie about passion, revenge and furniture in 17th-century Dublin.

Actually, the really scary thing was eating by myself on Saturday night. I always eat by myself. Cornflakes, Marmite on toast, ice-cream — as much of the tub as I can manage in one go, because we don't have a freezer. I eat alone because I am

neither a culinary sophisticate nor remotely rewarding to feed. There are only two heterosexual men I am truly friends with and I know this because they are the only ones I don't mind having dinner with. It's not just that they are better conversationalists. It is because if, nightmare of nightmares, some spaghetti falls ... out of my mouth ... on to my lap ... I know they won't point and laugh hysterically and call the police. I really hate people watching me eat. At the five-star hotel, they didn't watch. They just stared, like hawks. The waitresses had obviously been told that I was reviewing. They thought I was someone important. "I'm not Egon Ronay!" I wanted to cry. "I'm a *schemer-drink* who eats over the sink so I won't have to wash any dishes!"

And the food! Five courses. A sorbet

between the starter and main course. Fish with a different fish inside and weird, unidentified green bits on top. I don't know what they were, so you have to trust me, they were weird. For dessert — holy, sacred, most dear to my heart desert, which should be a BIG CHOCOLATE CAKE or some ICE-CREAM or a BOUNTY BAR — I had to eat alcohol-soaked biscuits on vanilla-pod ice-cream in a pool of crème anglaise and raspberry coulis, with extra cream and berries on stalks. This was not easy for me. I don't like different foods to touch each other and, by the end, I was almost in tears. In fact, I retired to my boudoir, where I ordered a cheese and tomato sandwich and waited with glistening eyes for the next Saturday and a night having Hooch spilt on me down the pub.

Garner Snakes? They have it easy compared with putting a show on in this place

It's official - the Edinburgh Fringe Festival is huge. Dust off any copy of the *Guinness Book of Records*, look up "Festivals: Enormous" and there she blows: 200 venues, 660 theatrical groups, 9,000 performers and a zillion shows: everything from *Waiting for Godot* in German to a semi-naked bloke doing acrobatics in a bath off the castle battlements. And who pays for this artistic outpouring? A mysterious government department? The punters? No. By and large it is the performers themselves. Like *Garner Snakes* struggling in their hundreds to mate with a single female in some grotesque wildlife documentary, here fringe performers struggle in droves to attract the attention of the press, the public, non-English-speaking tourists - anyone who will enable them to recoup at least part of their investment. After two years performing at other summer festivals across the world, trying in effect desperately to avoid this place, I am back myself and let me tell you - those *Garner Snakes* have it easy.

This is not the first outing for my show *All Classical Music Explained* - oh, no. A significant part of the past two months has been spent on planes delivering my message first to South Africa, then to Canada. And after 22,000 miles of touring, on Thursday 8 August, I hit a steady 75 in a hired Vauxhall Astra and roar north: M1/M6, with a journey break in Lancaster, where as a first-year economics student I first trod the boards in some (truly dreadful) college sketch shows. A hundred and fifty miles later, Auld Reekie hoves into view, heralded by a big poster of Mark Thomas looking subversive under an even bigger sign announcing "Edinburgh Welcomes the Fringe Festival".



By RAINER HERSCH

Funny thing: I realise that almost all the foreign festivals where I have appeared also call themselves "fringe" largely in deference to their Scottish ancestry without actually having any main festival of which they are on the fringe. Their desire is to conjure up a feeling of experimentation, of "otherness" that, apart from the occasional piece of wackiness, is gradually getting lost at Edinburgh in a sea of good PR and empire building.

The city is much as I remember it, with the exception of a few blocked-off streets here and there. Oh, and a brand-new Festival Theatre that seems to have sprung from nowhere on Nicholson Street - four levels, 2,500 seats and two cafés through whose glass frontages festival folk can break the tedium of High Art and actually observe some real Edinburgh life. My own venue is downstairs in a converted night-club whose key advantage is that it is central. At the stroke of 10.30, however, it must, Cinderella-like, convert itself back into a night-club, which means that the facilities are basic - two speakers suspended from the rafters and four unfocusable lights pointing directly at my head. This theatre space is costing more than I have ever paid anywhere else in the world and, to top it all, there is a turnaround of just 15 minutes between shows, which, with my props and sound equipment, I know to be impossible. I have a growing feeling that Edinburgh is taking the piss.

Monday, 12 August The show is running well - almost sold out on one occasion, which is amazing, since I know of at least two acts who have cancelled because not one single soul turned up. Today, two minutes after I start, a middle-aged couple hurry in and plonk themselves down on the end of a completely unoccupied bank of seats on my left. They are late and their position means that the audience - which had been carefully marshalled to sit in front and on my right - is now on three sides instead of just two. "Hello," I say as playfully as I can to one of them, "what's your name?" "I am the woman who booked you to appear on BBC Radio Scotland," she says. The audience groans. I smile and say: "I suppose that means 'Get on with it, you curly haired git'." But inside I hate her: having got in on a freebie, these professional latecomers now sit apart, visibly bored, depressing an audience who have paid seven quid to get in and are up for a good time.

Talk at the watering holes is all about venues, audiences and accommodation. Whereas a place to rest your head in many foreign events is either free or included in the deal - accommodation in Edinburgh is a nightmare. Hotels here get booked up a year in advance - who try? I can only assume by the locals. Where else can they be staying while they are renting out their homes to all of us? On the news today, it says Edinburgh and Glasgow are thinking of bidding jointly to host the Olympic Games in 2004. If they get it, I don't think there'll be a single Scottish family left at home this side of Dundee. My own place is costing £750 for the three weeks - and, having finished chok-ing at the cost, which only a sell-out every night could possibly cover, I am now warming to my little retreat overlooking Hollywood Palace. Seventy-eight twisting steps up to a fourth-floor peace that is only occasionally disturbed by the sound of bagpipes from distant Princes Street and the odd tannoy-blasted commentary from passing tour buses in the Royal Mile below. This is actually a wonderful perch - almost a listening post for the whole city. This morning, at about four o'clock - just after the last pissed comedian and media-type had tottered home from another round of staring over one another's shoulders looking for someone more important to talk to at the Guilded Balloon and before the first student group had assembled in the High Street to present more thigh-slapping highlights from this year's production - I took the opportunity to open one of the big-framed windows and admire my view of the old town. And, in among the far-off brush-hitting-glue of the few score fly-posters and muffled clicking of a couple of hundred critics typing their reviews, was the faint but unmistakable sound of a record-breaking 9,000 performers losing money. Thomas Sutcliffe returns next month

Don't bring all your noise into my silence

Arvo Pärt, one-time angry young serialist and now chart-topping devotional composer, is either genius or fruitcake. Michael Church tries to discover which

A bell-like chord on the piano, a high arpeggio on the violin: a musical line of exquisite simplicity, arching out of a bowl of silence. You may not think you know Arvo Pärt's *Frates*, but you've almost certainly heard it: it crops up all over the place, and it's the one contemporary work that regularly tops the charts on Radio 3. It comes in so many forms, and on so many combinations of instruments, that it has acquired mythical force; its limpid calls and counter-calls echo round the globe.

Almost as celebrated are the composer's lapidary thoughts. "It is enough when a single note is beautifully played." "If one approaches silence with love, music may arise." "My music could be compared to white light, which contains all colours. Only a prism can divide those colours and make them appear: this prism could be the spirit of the listener."

Not much is known about this publicity-shy Estonian - he insists that not much need be known - but here are some pointers. Born in 1935, he first encountered orchestral music as a teenager, bicycling round his home town's main square to savour the records being played over the loudspeaker system. He studied at Tallinn Conservatory, worked as a sound engineer, became a noted serialist composer, and wrote music for films. He then spent seven years in creative silence, from which he emerged with his new-minted - but mediocrally inspired - "tintinnabular" style, of which *Frates* is a ringing example. Married with two teenage sons, he now lives in splendid elegance in Berlin, where his favourite instrument is his harmonium. He also has a house in Essex, whence he often retreats to a nearby Orthodox monastery. He likes big cars.

He views music in strikingly physical terms. Of *Crudo*, in which a simple theme by Bach does symbolic battle with the evils of serialism, he comments: "I had a longing for the white keys, for the clean C major triad, with its undamaged associations." And he often resorts to culinary metaphor: "I choose the pitches and the relationships between tones in the same manner in which I select fruit and vegetables when I go to market." Last year, the organist Christopher Bowers-Broadbent - one of Pärt's regular collaborators - hit the jackpot by getting the composer to agree to write a piece expressly for him. "He did me a pencil-sketch of its shape, but its composition is a slow, tortuous process," says the organist. "At present he describes it as a green, unripe tomato." When stuck for inspiration, Pärt impulsively peels potatoes - whether his wife needs them or not.

If the occasion is right - if he responds to the audience - Pärt can be wonderfully loquacious, but he has a horror of journalists: so much so that his publishers issue would-be interrogators with "Some notes on interviewing Pärt".

"He hates his music being described as minimalist," we are informed: don't lump him with Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Point taken, though it might have been more pertinent to warn us not to confuse him with Orthodox convert and chant-freak John Tavener. "Be wary of describing him as reclusive or as some kind of mystic. He is married with two strapping sons... Well, I am tempted to do that (and strapping sons can surely happen to anyone, even mystics). The notes go on to castigate journalists who indulge in "inaccurate hearsay", and they indict this newspaper for describing him pouring a glass of water over his head in response to a question, "which he did do, but not in horseplay" (this is clearly deep stuff).

More tellingly, the notes dwell on Pärt's pathological aversion to talking about his work. "There are some questions he does not like to be asked at all, and which he describes as 'painful'." This seems fair. A composer (or a painter, or a writer) should feel under no obligation to talk about his art to journalists or to anyone else: his obligation is to his muse - or, in Pärt's case, to God - and if he discharges that with honour, it's enough. But which are these painful questions? The notes don't say. I shall have to find out by trial and error - assuming I get the chance. Tracking him down to an EMI recording session in Stockholm is only half the battle.

As Pärt and his minders snatch a bite and run through the programme for the day, that chance threatens to vanish before my eyes. At what time, he is asked, would he like to do the interview with the journalist from the *Independent*? He fixes us with a look of disbelief: "Are you serious?" Yes, we are. "So am I." He eats on in silence, the subject is dropped, and I wonder whether I should head back to London.

From his vantage point in the studio, he keenly studies the orchestra - to be conducted by his young compatriot, Paavo Järvi, son of Neeme - and then visibly relaxes, because for him a recording studio is home territory. He brushes away the offer of headphones: "We never had them at the broadcasting station in Tallinn. We just used to listen with the speakers - the more beautiful the music, the louder. The job turned us all into composers."

The work to be recorded is his long-ignored First Symphony, a diploma piece bursting with youthful aggression: relentlessly atonal, full of driving accelerations, piling up great mountains of jagged sound. Pärt pores over his score like a monk over his Bible, repeatedly calling a halt, explaining his requirements with physical gestures - arms flung wide, or with great

scooping bow-movements - which spill over into pencil-scrawls on any surface to hand. "This is barbed-wire music!" he shouts at one point. "It must not be played as though it were balsam." He seems to know exactly what he wants, yet at crucial moments he doesn't. Järvi wants to know how the opening should be played. "Forcefully, or mechanically?" The composer gives a sudden, apologetic smile. "I have no opinion. No feeling either here [pointing to his head], or here [his heart], or here [his gut]." "Bit of a head-banger, this," mutters the producer, but somehow all is resolved, and the recording is made to Pärt's satisfaction.

Whereupon he is transformed, clowning around the studio, picking up fruit from a bowl and assessing its acoustic qualities, comparing the sound of a grape with the superior sound of a strawberry. A surreal moment, and my cue to switch on my recorder.

The wariness instantly returns. Though his English is serviceable, he insists we converse in German. In the hesitant *pas de deux* that follows, the point of his publishers' warning becomes clear: some questions make him so nervous that his hands shake and he literally can't speak.

How long did it take him to write *Frates*? "Do you know the story of the artist who had been commissioned to paint a rooster? The patron paid a large sum and said he'd come back to collect it in two years' time. When he comes back and asks if it's done, the artist says no, but he will do it immediately - and he does a quick sketch on a piece of paper. The patron gets angry, so the artist says, 'Come with me', and opens the door of his studio. And the walls are covered with sketches of that rooster. That's how it is with me. I sketched out *Frates* in a few minutes, but I'd been preparing it for many years."

How many versions does it now exist in? "Many, and there will be many more to come, because the music is not bound up with any particular tone-colour. It's simply three-voiced music, with many possibilities. Every week I get requests to set it for different instruments. But my music looks simpler on the page than it is in reality. Musicians must put their souls into it, and this frightens them - as though they were standing in front of a mirror and seeing their true selves."

What music did he first play? "My own compositions. They were improvisatory, because I had difficulty writing them down and my parents, who were not musicians, could not help me."

When did he decide to be a composer? "I have not yet decided if I want to be one! My first ambition was to be a tram-driver - even though I had never seen a tram, and did not know what they looked like."

Is it still his ambition to write a piece using one note only? "That is the most beautiful possible utopia. I never stop dreaming of it." Which instrument would he use? "That is a hard question. Music is music. First there was music, and then came instruments. The most perfect instrument in the world is the human voice - the most perfect, exact measure. When we learn to play the violin, we try to make it sound like a human voice, not the other way round."

Why is mathematics so important in his music? "In every piece there is a number - maybe several numbers, but if so there is also a base-number, and that is the true one. That is something that affects all of us, and links us all together."

How much time does he spend in the monastery? A tortured silence. Does he regard himself as a religious composer? This is another "painful" question. "I can't say. But every step we take, everything we do, has to do with God, whether we like it or not. I write music: that's all I know. Listeners may be able to tell me more about it."

Does he listen to other people's music? "Absolutely not. But it's impossible not to hear it by accident - open the window and it comes in. There's far too much of it in the air. Beautiful things are played too often - we don't yet know what the consequences of this will be. One day we shall hate this music. Its use in television advertisements is a crime - but what can we do against this huge industry? Nobody is safe from it. None of us can stop them using our music."

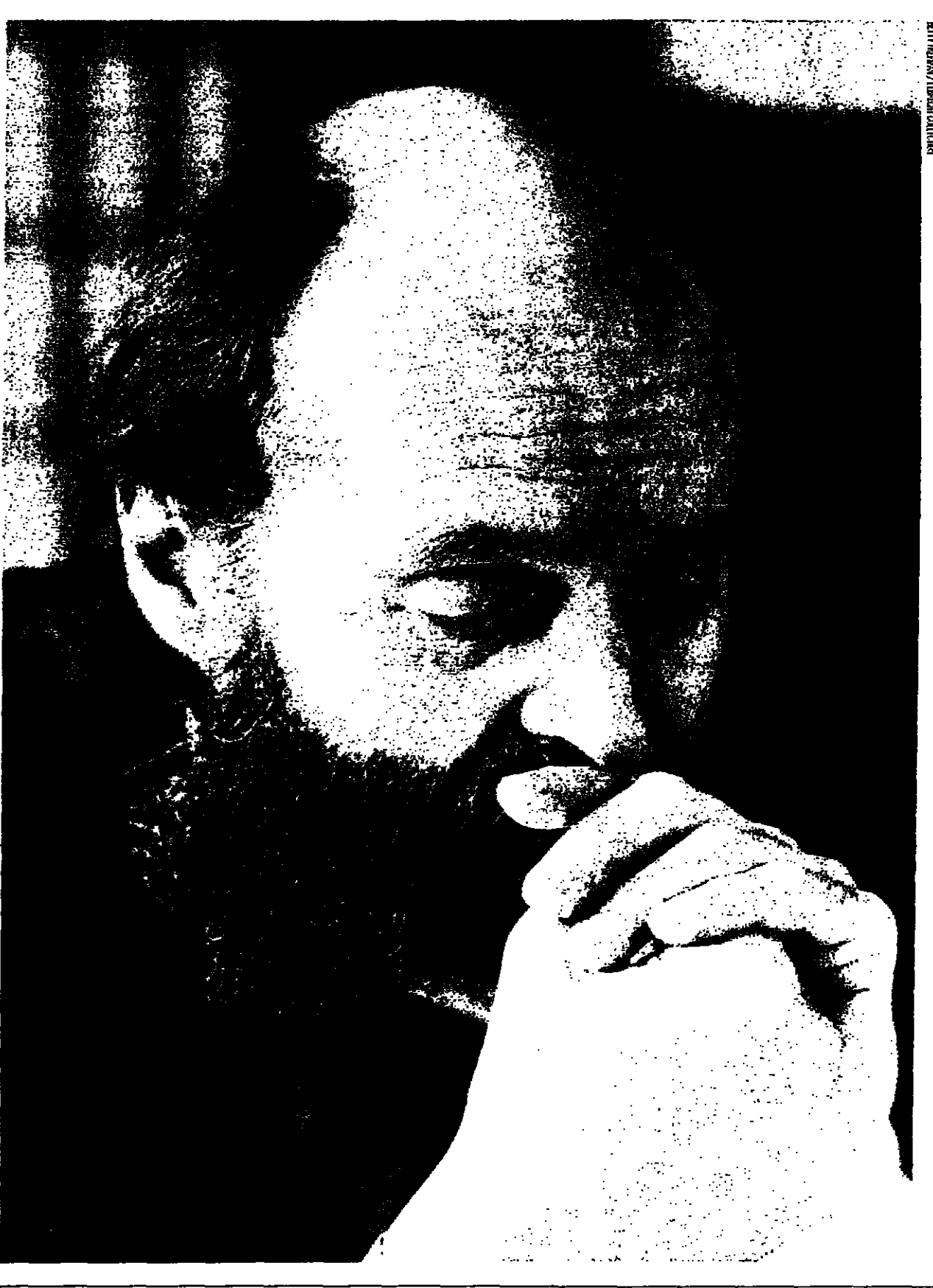
He once said that he created his music out of silence. "Yes, but I regret that I said it. It has brought so much noise into my silence. Creative silence must be buried, secret: when it's talked about, it's destroyed."


And his jealousy preserved privacy? "I despair of being able to preserve it. People don't realise the significance of what they ask me. If I am too open with interviewers, I become poorer by what I have given away - it's as though I have lost something. And my interviewers have gained nothing. This material is my energy, and it must go into music. If I put it into words, I no longer have it to put into music. If I put it into music, I have no interest in talking about it. It's as simple as two plus two."

Yes, I think it is.

Arvo Pärt is a featured composer at the 1996 Vale of Glamorgan Festival, 7-14 Sept. Booking: 01445 792151

His new CD, *Litany*, is on ECM (449 810-2)





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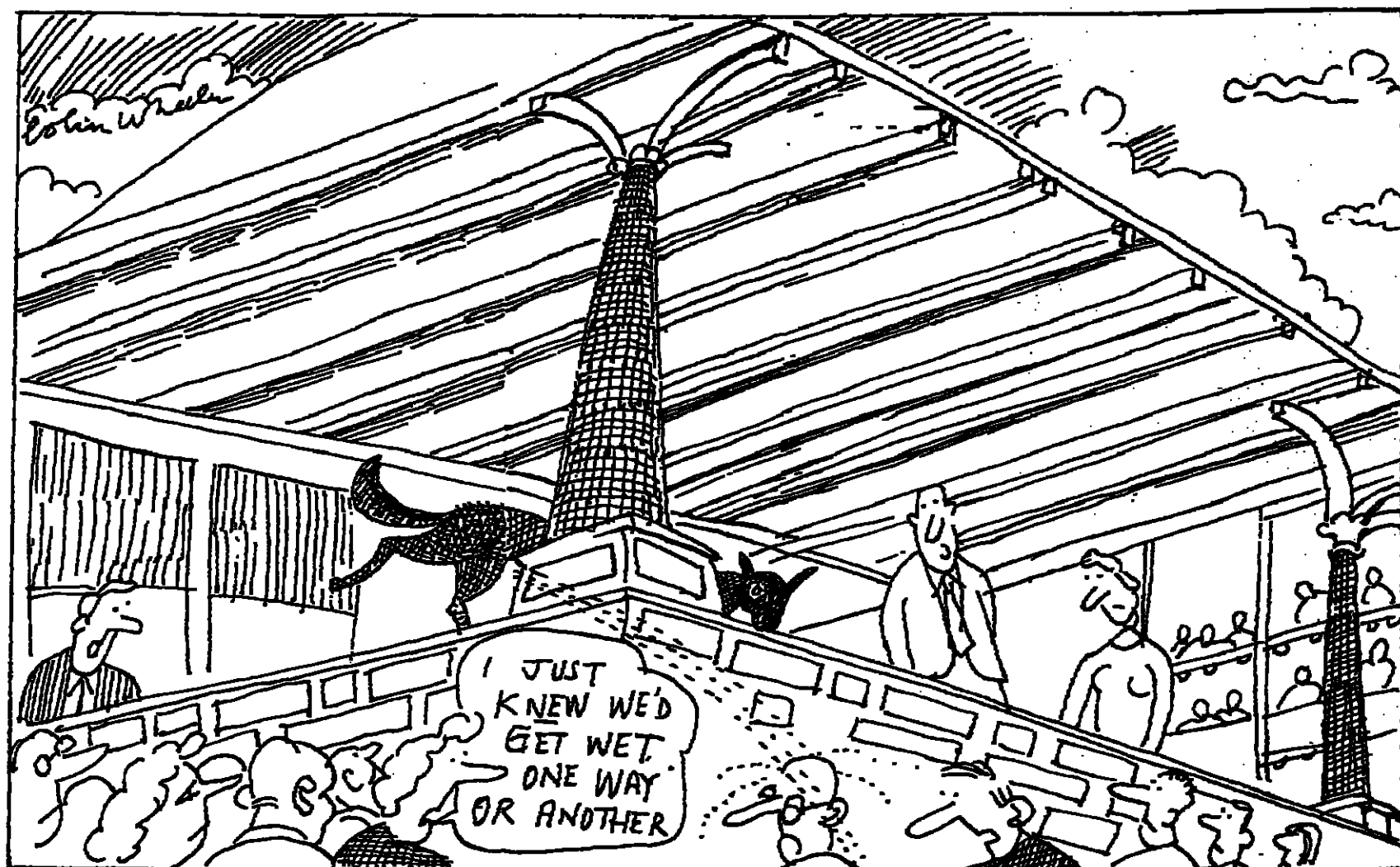
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arts reviews



THEATRE The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Shakespeare's Globe, London

The light faded. The rain fell. But Mark Rylance's first production at the reconstructed 'Wooden O' came home safe and dry. Paul Taylor finds himself pleasantly surprised by an invigorating groundling-pleaser

The thrust stage of Shakespeare's reconstructed Globe theatre famously features two pillars that support its canopy roof. To choose for the inaugural production a play which stars a dog might seem, therefore, to be asking for trouble – the stage baptised in more ways than one. But the canine kept continent and so – on the second night of Jack Shepherd's spirited staging of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* – did the heavens. Until, that is, the final act, when a couple of brief showers treated the groundlings – the 500 spectators who stand in the yard of this 'wooden O', exposed to the elements – to a tantalising trailer for the full-scale downpour that began the moment the performance finished.

I've never liked shows that cast the audience in a fake role: the *Good Old Days*-style of dressing up in period gear, say, for a repro old-fashioned evening at the music hall, replete with a formulaic participation ritual. The previous night, I'd been at a musical which trades on the pretence that its audience are Sixties swingers at a rock festival, so the falsities of this set-up were very much in my mind.

Any worries that the Globe would encourage, or even pander to, such tastes were quickly dispelled. The actors, like the audience, are in modern dress (Ray-Bans, peaked caps, sneakers, etc.). This produces a bizarre, dislocating sense of incongruity at first, rather as if one were to turn up at the Lloyd's building and find that it had been taken over by toga'd Romans. Like the colour-blind, accent-deaf casting, it's a welcome signal that this is not to be a theme park or hive of stuffy antiquarianism. The intent (to offer a fresh perspective on the plays by exploring them in the original staging conditions) clearly does not involve a nostalgia-fogged turning-away from the present.

First impressions of the place: I hadn't expected it to be anything like as intimate. The drawback to this is a certain amount of discomfort: I sat in the front row of the highest of the tightly packed galleries with their backless wooden benches and if anyone wanted to get past to a seat, the entire row would have to move right out. The other thing that came as a big surprise is the light – not the daylight, but the absence of lighting effects when it gets dark. The fact that there's no discrimination between how the stage and the specta-

tors are lit produces a rather drab evenness of tone across the former. We're so used to having our attention focused by lighting that the eye feels a trifle awkward exercising its greater freedom here.

Usually seen as the weak forerunner of the later, much greater romantic comedies, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which explores the conflict between the claims of love and of friendship, would not be everybody's first choice for an inaugural production. The comparative baldness of its dramaturgy (it depends, almost exclusively, on soliloquy, duologue and aside) does, however, let you see how certain features of the Globe stage work very clearly. The pillars, for example, make handy hiding places for eavesdroppers, as when Lennie James's Valentine sees his intended about to be raped by his friend Proteus. Now disguised as a boy, Stephanie Roth's Julia sits behind one at a café table, listening stricken, while upstage her lover vainly serenades Anastasia Hille's elegant, balconied Sylvia.

The fact that the actors can see the faces of the audience and perform so close to the groundlings leaning on the edge of the stage makes the soliloquies much more of an interplay. Mark Rylance, the artistic director of the Globe and the actor playing Proteus, works the crowd brilliantly in such sequences as, fundamentally unconvinced himself, he tries to persuade us of his casualistic justifications for betraying friend and lover. Even as he speaks, the bad conscience behind the bluff is comically apparent in the nervousness and repression of the body language. Proteus is, in many ways, a sneaky shit but Rylance's natural sweetness and miraculous audience rapport convince you that he is a good person gone astray. Whether this carries you through the notorious near-rape and Valentine's subsequent absurd gesture of friendship is another matter.

The duo who steal the show are Jim Bywater's excellent cloth-capped northern Launce and his impervious dog Crab, which looks out at the audience with an expression that says, "Do you see what I have to put up with?" while ignoring and driving to distraction its ridiculous master. To say nothing of heroically resisting those pillars.

To 15 Sept. Booking: 0171-401 9919

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL Philharmonia Orchestra / Kurt Sanderling, Usher Hall

Andras Schiff's double dose of the Brahms piano concertos was disconcertingly whimsical, lacking his usual conviction or heroics. By Raymond Monelle

Playing both the Brahms piano concertos in a single concert should be like a musical Charge of the Light Brigade: unwise, pointless, but heroic. The two works are radically different from each other, the first immature and patchy, the second autumnal, expansive, benign.

The pianist Andras Schiff is a great one for heroic vanities. This time, however, he came unstuck. There was an absent-minded air about the whole performance, as though he had learnt the notes but was still deciding what to do with them. Phrases lurched and buckled as he tried to poke them into shape: bravura passages were picked out stiffly.

The First Concerto started incredibly slowly, as if the conductor, Kurt Sanderling, were trying to revamp the opening as a slow movement. The strings of the Philharmonia Orchestra – sounding sparse after the super-orchestras we have heard in the Usher Hall recently – were unable to launch the piece with any conviction, and Schiff played whimsically, never uncovering any structural bones. He had a disconcerting way of going suddenly pensive when the excitement needed to sustain and grow; the earnest finale was played as a lulling dance measure, yet even the solid pizzicato of the cellos could lend it no life. This piece is not

Brahms at his best, but it has a certain nobility that was lost on this occasion. It sounded like an *Albumblatt*.

In the Second Concerto, Schiff was again more interested in dance measures than in the ceremonial grandeur of the piece, but his playing was more nimble, and at last Sanderling and the orchestra found some kind of symphonic spirit, the magical insinuations of the opening theme – in the development, and again in the recapitulation – making their stealthy formal points.

There was some symphonic splendour in the student songs of the scherzo, too, though Schiff chose a leisurely tempo that

deprived this movement of its heavy equestrian swing.

Even on a dim night, the Philharmonia always pull something out of the bag. This time it was a fathomlessly touching, vulnerable cello solo in the slow movement, full of pathos and regret, velvety yet a little resinous in tone. Schiff stopped injecting caprice into the phrases, and his meditative arpeggios underlined the long, still vistas of this entrancing poem.

There was some froth in the finale, but the pianist's empty dalliance returned. Heroic it was not: this was a lightweight performance, closing a distinctly undernourished concert.

TELEVISION

The Fall Guy / BBC2

Prankster television à la Beadle that tries to humiliate people, with lashings of irony. The whole thing was lost on Jasper Rees

It's thanks to shows like *The Fall Guy* that, in consonance with English cricketers and Scottish grouse, you involuntarily start to pray for summer's end. Bring me rainstorms, bring me cold, bring me school runs, but most of all bring me the balm of the autumn schedule.

Inside *The Fall Guy*, there's the nucleus of a cell of a seed of an idea for a moderately tasty tranche of light entertainment. But somewhere in the creative process, it's been dosed with chemical fertilisers, implanted with the DNA of fossilised programmes, and injected with a lethal overdose of irony. The result of this hazardous experiment is a hideously warped deformity, a programme so ill-conceived and almost scarily confusing that, for the first five minutes at least, you genuinely have not the first clue what is going on.

To simplify massively, it's kind of Beadle's *About* meets *The Generation Game*, with overtones of *Challenge Anneka* thrown in. Scatter on top a pot-pourri of semi-celebs who've plainly calculated that there's only one thing worse than bad publicity, and that's no publicity at all, and you're in the picture.

Guests are invited into the studio to watch previously nominated friends suffer unwitting humiliation at the hands of the programme's roving avenger Danny. To lash even more humour into the mix, Danny pretends to be a kind of idiot savant, utterly incompetent to perform the tasks asked of him. In Part 1 he had to be a photographer and a magician. He almost ruins the whole effect by showing incipient signs of unaffected charm, but the day is saved by Johnny Vaughan, our host in the studio.

The vocabulary has not been invented to encompass the levels of cocksureness this man achieves as he swivels on his absurdly – pardon me, ironically – high-backed chair. But look closely and you'll observe behind his manic manner just a flicker of fear in his eyes, common to presenters the world over as they register far too late that they should never have even pulled the treatment out of the envelope, let alone taken the job on.

Vaughan's role is to relay instructions via an audio link to Danny out in the field. So when Danny prepares to snap a man in a football kit, the order comes through to gaffer-tape a ball to his head. The other three victims were mildly humbled by Danny pretending to be a magician in a restaurant, a repetition which suggests a lack of either imagination or budget, or both.

None of the set-ups ultimately delivered because *The Fall Guy* chooses not to linger on the faces of the dupes when they realise they've been had. Even Jeremy Beadle understood *Candid Camera* enough to realise that this is the moment to wallow in the grisly frisson of *schadenfreude*.

Television lost its innocence when it discovered it could make fools of ordinary people. But in a strange reversal of fortune, *The Fall Guy* contrives to make fools of no one but its own devisers.



Johnny Vaughan and his Fall Guy, Danny Brown

THE WEEK IN REVIEW		THE EXHIBITION		THE MOVIE		THE TV		THE PLAY																							
David Benedict		VELAZQUEZ IN SEVILLE		ERASER		THE ONE DANCE PROJECT		IT COULD BE ANY ONE OF US																							
overview	A small exhibition about the early years of the Seville artist Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) before he left for Madrid at the age of 23. Fifty works, 20 by the man himself.	critical view	Iain Gale admired works by "one of the greatest artists" but harboured doubts about the exhibition as a whole. "In the blending of the natural and the supernatural... in the underplayed expression of emotion, [he] proved himself capable of handling fervour," cheered the <i>Observer</i> . "Sufficient excuse for the trip to Edinburgh. His precocious mastery... still astonishes," gasped the <i>FT</i> .	on view	National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, to 20 Oct. It will not tour.	our view	Don't expect a Cézanne-scale blockbuster, but among this curious collection there are truly wondrous pictures.	overview	Vanessa Williams, James Caan and a lot of hardware and bullets co-star in Charles Russell's blockbuster with Arnold Schwarzenegger as a marshal in the witness protection programme.	critical view	Adam Mars-Jones admired James Caan, who has the edge in "walking, talking, smiling... but even in action sequences he shows Arnie up." "Uncanny contrivance... sheer contempt for the audience," warned <i>Time Out</i> . "Bumping along from one arbitrary set-piece to the next," yawned the <i>FT</i> . "Principles dross," agreed the <i>Guardian</i> . "Perfunctory... a dishevelled B-movie," growled the <i>Times</i> .	on view	At virtually every screen that isn't showing <i>Independence Day</i> .	our view	For Arnie's fan club only... who have shelled out \$142,240,971 on it thus far.	overview	At 46, Michael Flatley is back with the 11-strong White Oak Dance Project, including Jamie Stalton and Rob Beesley, performing a mood-bill by Mark Morris, Limón, Cunningham and others.	critical view	Louise Lyster was enthralled. "More an incarnation of the showgirl than a mere performer... like a dancing flame that seems to burn unimpaired." "Replete with dazzling technical perfection from his days as a classical dancer, Flatley doesn't get any better than this," agreed the <i>Moscow</i> . "Said the greatest dancer on the planet," concurred the <i>Telegraph</i> .	on view	Last performance tonight at the Coliseum, London WC2 (0171-639 0399).	our view	Never mind that some of the choreography is lightweight, believe the box office or returns.	overview	Alan Ayckbourn directs his revised version of his 1983 parody of country-house writers – complete with variable endings – with a strong cast including Janet Dibley, Juliet Mills and Jon Staveley.	critical view	Paul Taylor didn't believe a word of it. "Why the author wanted to revise such weak stuff is an abiding mystery." "Janet Dibley has a million times... Not a lot less satisfying than the <i>Crucible</i> denouement," chuckled the <i>Times</i> . "Proves to be just a major discovery, an eminently agreeable piece greatly enjoyed by a shirt-sleeved audience," admired the <i>Guardian</i> .	on view	At the new Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough (01723 370541), to 14 Sept, followed by a season at Chichester.	our view	Nice performances, shame about the show. Quite some way from Ayckbourn's considerable best.

Avenging the prince with crocodile tears

The tragic story of Caspar Hauser has been hijacked by a pushy psychoanalyst. By Marina Warner

Wicked Stepmother tales weave back and forth between fact and fiction. In *Snow White*, her death is ordered and the huntsman spares her out of pity, but in historical chronicles, there's rarely a magical reprieve. Some of the most vicious, Jacobean-style stories feature true-life characters, like the 11th century Saint Godelive who, with her husband's connivance, was tormented and abused by her mother-in-law, until they finally did away with her by drowning her down a well.

This kind of malevolent plot returns as structure, as explanation, as dream, to provide a way of controlling the unanswerable riddles of history. It crystallised, for example, around the pathetic Caspar Hauser, wild child, boy-man, who is, alongside Chatterton, one of the most enigmatic and mythopoetic figures of the Romantic age. He was discovered in the town square of Nuremberg in 1828. All his life until that point, he had been kept in a cellar in which he could not stand up; had been given only bread and water; was sick when he first ate meat and drank beer; and could not speak, except for one sentence: "I want to be a rider like my father". He was about 12 years old, it was reckoned, and could give no further description of his origins or his identity. He had not seen daylight or starlight; the first sight of them overwhelmed him. He walked awkwardly, as he had only recently learned how to; he was unable to distinguish image from reality.

In his lifetime, a distinguished Bavarian jurist, Anselm von Feuerbach, wrote an account of Caspar Hauser and published it after Hauser died, in mysterious circumstances, in 1832. In it, von Feuerbach hintily endorsed the story that Caspar Hauser was a lost prince, that he had been spirited away from his mother's arms in childhood, that another, dying infant had been substituted, who had then died; and this conspiracy had been organised by a rival, in order to secure for her own son the throne of Baden. Caspar Hauser—

Lost Prince: The Unsolved Mystery of Caspar Hauser by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson
The Free Press, £16.99

crippled, amnesiac, possibly autistic — was, according to this theory, a usurped king. The memoir is a remarkable document: written with a lively feeling for case-study narrative, it declares the burden of its story is "the murder of a soul", a chilly Enlightenment experiment (von Feuerbach examines Caspar in close up, from the peculiarities of his knees to his first encounter with snow). But it's also an emotional manifesto, in the aftermath of Rousseau, for the original innocence of the child, and hence the perfidious vice of adult humanity. The ascribed aristocracy of Caspar works to add preciousness to this state of grace, as it does in the title of this book, *Lost Prince*, in which Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson milks the metaphor of aboriginal princeliness to serve his own interest.

The *tabula rasa* of Caspar Hauser has inspired much speculation, as well as some outstanding films and poetry — the finest being David Constantine's recent book-length narrative poem in *terza rima*, in which he writes:

the truth
Seems to have lain a million years beneath
The dripping accretions which are
The writing of doctors, prelates and legal men

In the dripping accretions clustering on Caspar Hauser, there cannot have been many giving off quite such a whiff of opportunism, tendentiousness and slackness as this edition of von Feuerbach's text by Masson. From the jacket, you'd think Masson has written a new book about the episode; but his contribution consists of a muddled, 70-page introduction, in which he claims that the documents he reprints in appendices are fresh discoveries (they may be newly published in English, but their

contents undo no tangles). His bad faith shows even more clearly in the uses to which Masson puts the story of Hauser's tragic mystery.

Jeffrey Masson has made the diagnosis of child (sexual) abuse his special area of interest, ever since he argued in *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*, that Freud damaged his patients and all who came after them on the psychoanalytic couch when he developed his later, Oedipal theory and refused to believe that the tales of infant seduction his patients were recounting had truly taken place and were not sexual fantasies. Masson's arguments have been highly influential in the current American crisis around "recovered memory" and child abuse, and von Feuerbach's text gives him two strong lines of argument which he takes up with energy: first, the idea that personal testimony should be considered valid, for he stresses, "here we have before us a case that is by its very nature unique, in which for the most part, the evidence for the crime lies hidden in the human soul." (his italics) Masson links this with a plea to listen to the witness of children, and even more extremely, to take dreams diagnostically, as memories. He reprints Caspar Hauser's recorded dreams, and uses fragments of heraldic crests, and parts of buildings that appear in them as proof of his noble infancy. This offers a variation on the contested theory that victims can suppress altogether traumatic episodes from their past, but relive them in therapy, and it comes close to aligning such healing practices with the work of diviners, haruspices and fortune tellers. Dreams should be listened to, of course, but hardly as a forensic evidence or historical records. Secondly, von Feuerbach proposed to institute in law "a crime against the life of the soul", again, in the context of child abuse today, Masson wishes to pursue molesters with new, improved means.

Oddly, Masson doesn't mention that Caspar Hauser was probably seduced by one of the women who offered him shelter, as David



The enigmatic figure of Caspar Hauser in Werner Herzog's 1974 film Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

Constantine dramatised, poignantly, in his poem; but then Masson isn't interested in the workings of Caspar as an individual.

Children, as we have seen again only this week, are imprisoned for adult's pornographic purposes, but this was not what happened to Caspar Hauser — even Masson does not suggest this. Once more, the image of the innocent abused is not invoked to mitigate child suffer-

ing, but to draw attention to the exquisite pity, the superior sensibility, of the observer. It would have been much more helpful to analyse the sexualisation of childhood in American society than to weep for the sins committed against children and demand vengeance. Masson declares his sympathy for Caspar Hauser's plight so that we might think he has a heart; but the more he opens his, the emptier it looks.

The end of the world is nigh. Call Jerry for information

There's a millenarian under every bed. Felipe Fernandez Arnesto investigates the free market world of apocalyptic theory

Millenarianism ought to be respectable: plenty of decent religions with clever, unthreatening believers started as end-is-nigh cults, including Mormonism, Shi'ism and good old Christianity. Yet when we meet modern millenarians we regard them as mad and suspect them as dangerous. Their beliefs are not much more irrational than our fears: more murders, suicides and terrorism happen outside millenarian movements than within them. So, what are we really afraid of?

The *End of Time* has the right answer, along with a few wrong ones, in a delightfully spooky, engagingly quirky, compellingly presented array of apocalyptic examples. Damien Thompson's thoughts on the subject have been concentrated by three well-publicised cases of lethally mad millenarianism in the Nineties. In 1993 the self-appointed "sinful messiah", David Koresh, was immolated with 80 followers in Waco. In 1994-5, 69

members of the chalet-chic "Solar Temple Cult" perished in mass murders and suicides, ostensibly "to escape a fate of destruction now awaiting the whole wicked world in a matter of months, if not weeks." In 1995 followers of a Buddhist cult-leader in Japan tried to stir up collective nirvana with a poison gas attack on Tokyo's deepest subway station.

Thompson helps to make these events intelligible by setting them in three contexts: the Christian millenarian tradition which goes back to the Book of Revelation and to Daniel; the New Age movement which expects vast changes to accompany the astral prominence of Aquarius; and the "cultural warfare" which makes some of the enemies of modern society denounce it as Antichrist.

None of these seems related to the year 2000, though Thompson makes it "a major factor in the current flowering of apocalypticism in the West." It is extremely hard to find any millenarian

The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium by Damien Thompson, Sinclair-Stevenson, £16.99

group which attaches special significance to a date with three zeroes in it. The year 2000 will mark a thousand years since nothing-in-particular. It is quite close to the two thousand anniversary of the incarnation of Christ but — owing to an error of computation by the monk who devised the system — misses it by a few years. Even among millenarian Christians, the incarnation has only occasionally figured as a key date from which to calculate the end of the world.

Most movements have expected Armageddon in years not divisible — in our system of reckoning — by 1000, or even 100. No evidence supports the myth, peddled in trashy history books,

that the end of the world was widely expected in 1000AD. The year which aroused most apocalyptic excitement in the middle ages in Europe was 1260. Various prophets staked their reputations on dates in the 1670s. The early Adventists experienced their Great Disappointment in 1844.

Thompson is no fanatic but, after studying millenarians so earnestly, he sees them under every bed. For him, all Christian fundamentalists are millenarians by definition: by extension the whole "conservative evangelical world" is tainted by a "free market in apocalyptic theology". He accepts Norman Cohn's case that Nazis and communists are motivated by a secular version of millenarianism. He then goes further, detecting "the rhythm of Daniel... underneath most political philosophies," including specifically "Liberals, Greens and Free Marketeers." All genocide, he suggests, is "only explicable in terms of

an apocalyptic ideology". He represents the Renaissance and the founding of America as millenarian effects: America is the "Last World Empire" of prophetic tradition. Other millenarians include "perhaps a million people in Seoul." Even the Pope is caught out in unguardedly apocalyptic language. I have just read the Pope's *Agenda for the Third Millennium* and am comforted to find that he expects the next millennium to be like the one we have just had.

This is a book to read with pleasure and contemplate with dread. It is well-written and has a gripping quality derived from the nice balance of rollicking subject-matter with judicious prose. Though not all his targets are hit, the real millenarians Thompson describes so vividly are seriously weird and worrying. Odious right-wing Protestant evangelicals are destroying cultures and backing dictatorships in their anxiety to prepare the Third World for the Second Coming.

Susceptible Catholics are being duped and frightened by phoney visionaries. Anti-semitism is being cunningly masked as New-Age mumbo-jumbo. Pseudo-churches sell "ringside seats for the death-throes of civilisation." Aum Shin-rikyo look-alikes dream of precipitating the end with spectacular feats of chemical and biological terrorism. These groups withdraw into self-nourishing communities of fear and nurse each other's fantasies on the Internet.

Even peaceable millenarians are disturbing. "Bo" Gritz, the much-decorated Vietnam veteran, has found peace as he awaits the end in Idaho. But adverts for his land-sales exploit the susceptibilities of other end-timers, promising "a refuge in a time of Lot, an ark in a time of Noah. If none of these signs are true, the Bible is false and God is dead. We are still left with a magnificent home in a secure environment. Call Jerry for details, plot maps and information."

The legacy of dust and Ashes

Harry Pearson re-examines the reputations of two 20th century cricketing giants

For a brief spell in the early Thirties Walter Hammond was the greatest cricketer in the world. Then along came the Australian Don Bradman, a batsman whose run-gathering outstripped that of anyone else in the history of the game. Hammond, a man deeply conscious of his position, watched his hard-earned pre-eminence not so much crumble as summarily collapse. Withdrawn and difficult to begin with, he never fully recovered his equilibrium. In eerie symmetry of these events two new biographies of Hammond and Bradman recently appeared within a month of one another. It will be no consolation to the deceased Wally, but for once he slightly shades it over The Don.

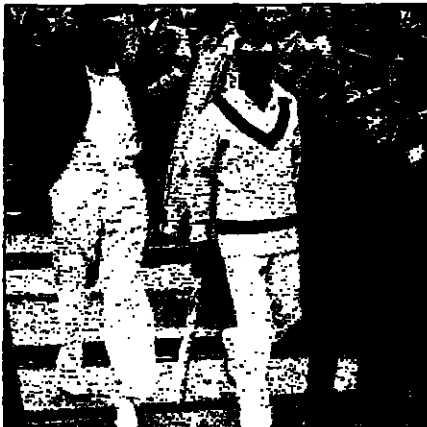
Hammond's life as detailed in David Foot's pleasantly discursive biography is both mysterious and poignant. The batting, given gay joy to thousands, seems to have given Hammond no pleasure at all, while his many dalliances with women ("Wally, well, yes — he liked a shag," the great Lancashire cricketer Eddie Paynter once commented when asked to sum up the man he played alongside for England) brought little solace and, according to Foot, at least one major illness. It is Foot's contention that during the MCC's 1925-26 tour of the West Indies the mysterious ailment which laid Hammond low and would keep him out of cricket for a year was syphilis. Much has been made of this in *Wally Hammond — The Reason Why* but anyone hoping for scurrility will be dis-

Wally Hammond: The Reason Why by David Foot, Robson Books, £17.95
Bradman by Charles Williams
Little, Brown, £20

appointed. The episode fills two chapters and is one of the books least interesting aspects. Better by far are Foot's evocative descriptions of West Country cricket and the Clifton social scene between the wars.

This was the world in which Hammond moved and, while it may have been venereal disease and its treatment with mercury which created his moods, his uneasy quest for social betterment surely exacerbated them. For Hammond began his career in cricket at a time when there was still a rigid dividing line between amateurs ("gentlemen") and professionals. While other great professional batsmen such as Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe had taken pride in their craftsmen status, to Hammond it was an embarrassment. He aspired to be a "gentleman" and eventually became one, though the effort almost ruined him.

A strange and in many ways unlikable man, Hammond was so laconic as to make Calvin Coolidge seem like a chatterbox (during a 700 mile car journey across Australia his sole utterance to co-passenger Len



Outstripped: Wally Hammond (left) and Don Bradman (right), England v Australia 1936

Hutton was, "Look out for a garage. We need some petrol"). He rarely praised a team mate and seems never to have offered advice to young players. His treatment of his first wife, Dorothy offers conclusive proof that to be a "gentleman" on the field did not necessarily mean being a gentleman off it. Yet for all that there remains something deeply affecting about David Foot's tale. The impression given of Hammond is of a man for whom happiness was permanently out of reach.

For Don Bradman cricket also brought its problems. A man of such fame that fans

would stand outside the ground while he batted just for the pleasure of watching the scoreboard tick over, the strain of public expectation would play havoc with his health, while his unusual combination of ruthlessness on the field and diffidence off it would alienate many team mates.

Like David Foot, Charles Williams seeks to place his subject in a wider social context. In elegant style he shows the importance of Bradman's genius to an Australia emerging from Britain's shadow and links the rows between The Don and some of his fellow Australian cricketers to the struggle between Empire and republicanism. Williams points out that the Anglophile, conservative Bradman's most vociferous critics were, in the main, Irish Catholics with Labour sympathies. It is a fair point, but one suspects also that The Don's parsimony may have been a strong contributing factor. Amongst the gregarious post-match drinkers Bradman's love of England may have counted against him less than his refusal to stand a round.

What has never been in doubt is Bradman's reputation as the game's greatest batsman. Even those who detested him, would wholeheartedly testify to that. While the quality of his runs may not have pleased the style-conscious, the quantity of them kept the crowds coming. When people went to watch Hammond it was to see a great batsman. When they went to watch Bradman it was to witness a phenomenon.

WAITING FOR THE SUN
the story of the los angeles music scene

'A magnificent war-torn all appreciation ... will have you riding through forgotten areas of your record collection with renewed passion'
- Ian Fortnam, Vox

'Very good on the bad magic beneath the palm trees ... It is fabulously authoritative'
- Ian Thomson, Sunday Times

'A brilliant, widescreen history of the city's music scene from the jazz days on Central Avenue to the gangsta rappers of the 1990s'
- Paul du Noyer, Mojo

'This fascinating book ... gets intoxicatingly close not just to musicians but to the culture which surrounds them'
- Alan Thompson, Independent on Sunday

BARNEY HOSKYN'S

books

All you need to know about the books you meant to read



UTOPIA (1916)

by Thomas More

Plot: Utopia is a classical pun meaning either "good place" or "no place": ambiguity pervades the whole work. In Part I a fictional Thomas More argues with explorer Raphael Hythloday about contemporary social mores. Raphael claims that the rich are hooked on money, always wanting more to enhance self-esteem by impoverishing others. The poor become necessarily poorer and turn to crime. The rich respond by imposing draconian legislation. Raphael refuses to become a politician because philosophers don't crawl. More suggests that a humane presence can influence public affairs beneficially. In Part II Raphael describes the communist state of Utopia. Towns, houses and clothes are all the same. Utopians rotate urban and agricultural tasks. Brains individuals can become scholars and MPs. Women share the men's work but also do the domestic chores. The filthy jobs are performed by slaves culled from criminals and prisoners of war. Utopians have an NHS and accept divorce, euthanasia and suicide. Pre-marital sex is out. Diamonds are used for playthings, gold for chamberpots. Utopian religion is a species of rational theism. Conflicting beliefs are held in respect. The book ends with a sermonette on the deadliest of the seven sins, pride.

Theme: Early Christians "had all things in common". Heathen Utopia shows how the abolition of property and the adoption of pseudo-monastic rules can curb humanity's greed and envy.

Style: More's Latin avoids Ciceronian ornament and aims to be "homely, plain and simple". Even so, a battery of rhetorical tricks manages to tease and puzzle.

Chief strengths: More's opinion of the Utopians is buried under layers of knowingness. He presents them as heartless, reasonable, liberal and sinister.

Chief weakness: The construction is haphazard. Although More knows he wants to finish with a denunciation of pride, the details of Utopian life emerge arbitrarily.

What they thought of it then: Dim-witted readers scoured maps to locate Utopia's position. Erasmus and his bunch of Euro-humanists chuckled wisely and wrote appreciative letters to each other. Thomas Cromwell, More's arch-rival, preferred Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

What we think of it now: Conservative Catholics believe the text should be regarded as a *ludibrium* (Latin for *jeu d'esprit*). Post and neo-Marxists take it all in deadly earnest.

Responsible for: Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Swift's decision to put Gulliver among clever horses and team after team of William Morris's wallpaper socialism.

Vaudevillian vampires and the scent of baloney

Roger Clarke thinks old fashioned blood-suckers are best

Supping with Panthers by Tom

Holland, Little, Brown, £12.99

Servant of the Bones by Anne

Rice, Chatto, £15.99

Tom Holland is, in the tradition of the great English gothic novel, an over-educated young man who has taken to writing lurid pot-boilers with great aplomb. But there all resemblance to his gay and asthmatic late Georgian forbears must end. Holland is no Beckfordian fantasist, no Orfordian aesthete – and thankfully no Dr Polidori, whose contribution to the early Victorian Penny Dreadful genre, *The Vampire*, proved the inspiration for Holland's previous best-seller.

Supping with Panthers is set initially on the frontiers of the British Raj in India, before packing its vampire-killing equipment and decamping for foggy old London during the time of Jack the Ripper. Holland bags historical and fictional personalities like so many hunting trophies and throws them all together into a ripping yarn.

His real and imaginary game-room exhibits include the much-maligned Dr Polidori appearing as an "undead" opium-den doorman in Rotherhithe; Byron as a vampire gets a second reprise, and Bram Stoker as himself endures the "real story behind Dracula", his de-factualised virginial ward, Lucy, still the prey of international blood-suckers. Oscar Wilde does a vaudevillian turn, voicing a few feeble *bons mots* of Holland's invention.

The title of this book *Supping with Panthers* is perhaps a reference to Wilde's description to the rent boys Bosie liked to use. Holland's use of the phrase is self-consciously more exotic, yet at the same time, more mundane. His panthers are the creepy followers of the Indian goddess Kali on a Saga Holiday to the hub of the Empire – with a lit-

tle literary flavour thrown in like so-much Garam Massala.

It's possible, I suppose, to be charmed by Holland's unabashed re-use of genre material – though I found it exasperating, without a single original thought or image. The book certainly opens at a jolly pace and pretty soon we're in a battle with zombies that seems like a cross between *Carry On Up The Khyber* and *Night Of The Living Dead*; despite its silliness, when this opening section concludes (purportedly written by a retired officer but Holland doesn't have the skill to stay in character) the book never recovers its earlier, more fulsome quality.

Fulsome is a description easily applied to Anne Rice, whose books are always compared to orchids and lush hothouse effusions of morbidity and sex. I found *Servant of the Bones* beguiling and seductive in a quite unexpected way: it is old-fashioned and sad and decorous with none of Holland's testosterone-driven narrative.

The bones of the story are as follows: a young woman, Esther Belkin, dies in a violent mugging in New York with the name of a Babylonian spirit, "Azriel", on her lips. She is the step-daughter of a powerful cult-leader, a Brooklyn cabalist who is plotting to unleash millennial genocide on an unsuspecting world. Azriel is a spirit of uncertain provenance who has

been trapped by an ancient ritual in his own gold-plated skeleton. Whoever owns the Sumerian box with his remains curled up like a fetus inside gets a certain amount of influence over the reluctant spirit.

Like all of Rice's best supernatural creatures, Azriel is personable and tormented, easily the best human in the book. Why he has appeared, after centuries of sleep, at the death of Belkin's step-daughter, neither Belkin nor Azriel really know. Azriel is an unwilling lackey, despised by the Jewish Rabbis who have looked after his remains, though his ability to inspire terror and death are never directly described. So he remains in Rice's imagination a beautiful boxed in demi-daemon who responds to kindness and can even pleasure women.

Rice aficionados – and there are millions of them – will no doubt detect all her familiar touchstones, the death of a daughter being the most obvious. They will also be pleased to find her apparently back on top form, writing with confidence and with the odd flash of brilliance. As usual, she is able to introduce very bizarre ideas into a populist genre and never makes the reader feel an ounce of discomfort.

The mystery of Anne Rice is how she manages to animate large parts of her novels which are simply conversations with not much obviously happening. Her narrative here is surprisingly complex, but almost incidental to the true star of the novel, which is the tone of sweet solemnity that pervades the book with a scent – yes, perhaps it is of lightly phosphorescent, top-canopy orchids.



It's a stake out: Christopher Lee falls victim to traditional vampire-killing equipment

Losing your heart in the madhouse

D J Taylor is in two minds about an ironic tale of insanity

The asylum of the title is Broadmoor – this much seems clear from a jacket note to the effect that the author's father once worked there as medical superintendent – and the opening chapter of Patrick McGrath's agreeably taut fourth novel finds each of its chief characters lodged in that establishment. They include a desiccated psychiatrist named Max Raphael, his brooding wife Stella, an older physician, Peter Cleave, who doubles as the book's narrator, and a seriously disturbed intern called Edgar Stark, who has been incarcerated after murdering his wife and mutilating her decapitated head.

Ah, the subjects novelists choose these days, to be sure! Stark is a sculptor by profession, and Stella, watching his muscular form going about its tasks in the garden – Max is having the old conservatory refurbished, bless him – can console herself with the thought that the object of her affections is an "artist". There is even

more comfort in the realisation that his offence (motive: sexual jealousy) can be romanticised as a *crime passionelle*. Boredom, frustration and summer languor do the rest. It comes as no surprise – at any rate to the reader – when after a particularly intense coupling in the Raphaels' marital bed, Stark steals a suit of Max's clothes and goes over the wall.

At this point canny onlookers are suspicious of Stella but unable to prove her involvement. All this changes when Stella deserts Max and their only son Charlie to join her paramour in his derelict London hideaway. Before long the old behavioural patterns – rage, insane jealousies, morbid fixations and so on – reassert themselves: Stella, returning nervously to the loft after a violent confrontation, finds that Stark has vanished and is herself arrested by the policemen sent to find him.

Happily, Stella avoids prosecution; her husband, on the other hand, loses his job. Removed to a barbarous

Asylum

by Patrick McGrath

Viking, £16

corner of North Wales, where Max is forced to accept a much humbler position, she goes completely to seed, takes up with the weaselly farmer next door and occupies her leisure in gin-sodden reveries. Such is the level of her detachment that, accompanying Charlie on a school trip, she can only watch abstractedly as the boy drowns in a hillside pool. Initially arraigned on a manslaughter charge, Stella is eventually returned to the asylum and the all-too tender ministrations of Dr Cleave, since promoted to superintendent.

While all this is written up with huge attack and intensity, full of shrewdly observed dilemmas and incidental drama, McGrath can't avoid – in fact,

rather seems to welcome – a kind of staginess which in consequence seems mildly tongue-in-cheek. When Max's boss remarks of his charges that "We try and treat them, but not, I'm afraid, with any great success. We can manage them...but we don't really know how to treat them. Because we don't really understand what they are." Stella wonders, "Is he talking about his patients...or women?"

The same kind of parboiled irony infects the moment when Stella, mindful of what Stark did to his wife, listens to him grunting over a drawing of her head as if he were "performing a particularly delicate surgical operation."

Many of the same problems attend the omniscient, if not always reliable, narration of Dr Cleave. The account is retrospective, so we know that Cleave knows – or thinks he knows – everything. This gives a satisfying gravity to his narrative, while making the reader raise an eye over some of the inci-

dental wayside nature notes (did Stella tell him about the fat bumble-bee that crawled up a thistle head, then lifted into the drowsy air and sailed away? Or did he guess?) and see immediately through the endless hints and prefigurations to the messy climax that lies ahead. Prone to describe emotional disturbance as "a depressive episode," Cleave has the professional habit of explaining motivation ("Max behaved now like a man who no longer believed in doing his moral duty...") rather than demonstrating it.

The result is a novel so tightly controlled by its voice that the characters end up stifled. Charlie, for instance, is marked down as a sacrificial victim at an early stage, and I never could believe in Cleave's (frustrated) wish to marry Stella.

Neatly plotted and sharply written – the scenes in Stark's hideout are particularly well done – *Asylum* would have benefited from some less obtrusive schematics.

A very peculiar childhood

The relationship between mothers and sons is the centrepiece of a fine first novel. By Susie Boyt

Georgina Hammick's daring and original first novel is an acutely observed study of a very peculiar childhood and the unhappy adult it produces. "There's a lot of sadness and madness in our family...I hope you don't catch it," little Hannah is told by her guardian, the severe and learned Aunt Hope, as the two leaf through a family photograph album. As they examine carefree snaps of Hannah's grandfather, the one who blew his brains out with a shotgun while his wife was shopping, or her great Uncle Angus who fell from a high window to a sharp death on the black railings below and the generations of drunks and depressives in between, what really strikes Hannah is the uniform ugliness of them all. She combs the album unsuccessfully for a beautiful face, someone whose regularity and neatness of feature might suggest that her life could be different from those of her relations.

From this austere beginning Hammick conducts the narrative with an impressive fluency and some

The Arizona Game
by Georgina Hammick
Chatto, £14.99

humour. We are carried back and forth between Hannah's childhood in Green Copse Road, the family's next home in a place called Arizona in the West Country. Hannah's adulthood with its failed romances and some glimpses of her life in London with her son Finch.

Hammick's grasp of the triumphs and disasters of childhood is extremely strong. She writes with great subtlety, but also manages to harness a child's perspective to the world she describes, so that an important event such as the death of Hannah's uncle on a day when she herself is attacked by youths at the local swimming pool, is given the same sort of emphasis as a more ordinary mishap like a trip to the fairground which turns out to be just about as excruciating and violent as a childhood disappointment can be. Hammick's eye for detail is impressive: we can almost smell the chlorine and the verucos at the swimming baths, feel the stickiness of the sour vomit at the fun fair.

Hannah's adult relationship with her own son is an exceptional piece of writing, an unflinching and robust account of a mother furnishing her child with the means for yet another

generation of domestic tragedy. The pain of being an adolescent, the complicated power struggles that exist within the family and a parent's failure to attend to its child's unhappiness are subjects that many first novels investigate. But in *The Arizona Game* Hannah is never allowed to free herself from her childhood losses and come into her own, and neither can her son Finch.

In fact, Hannah's intense dislike of her child is the strongest relationship in this book. She lacks the insight and the inclination to connect her feelings, or the lack of them, to the oddness of her own start in life, but the reader cannot fail to do so. The degree of Hannah's hatred for her young son, especially following her sympathy for her early losses and difficulties, is very shocking. Hammick makes Hannah's loathing extremely vivid. The fact that Finch also happens to be obese, instead of making him seem vulnerable to his mother, just makes a bigger focus for her hatred. Everything about him is larger than life. His great intelligence ought to be impressive to his mother, but only manages to impress her with its bulk.

Yet *The Arizona Game* is not all heaviness and trauma. The book maintains a lightness of touch and some nice jokes, and Hannah's final decision to travel, to move away from her former life does allow for a slim ray of hope.

Ava Malaria

Hugo Barnacle is intrigued by a tale of electronic detective work

The Calcutta Chromosome
by Amitav Ghosh
Picador, £15.99

Antar is an Egyptian living in Manhattan, a homeworker for the giant International Water Council, which absorbed his former employer, the public health agency LifeWatch in the late 1990s. He sits all day in his flat, tapping away at the terminal that links him to the Council's super-computer, Ava.

Mostly he seems to help Ava with the filing. One of the chores is to file records of every item found in premises taken over by the Council. As a rule Ava can find a slot for anything unaided, but sometimes she shows Antar a mystery object to ask where it ought to go. Once it was a snowstorm paperweight, another time a Tipp-Ex bottle (nice joke.) Today she projects a giant hologram of an old LifeWatch ID card, just discovered at a homeless people's shelter the Council has requisitioned in Calcutta.

The card belongs to L. Murugan, an adoptive New Yorker like Antar but originally Indian. He vanished in his native Calcutta back in 1995 while pursuing a pet theory about malaria. The theory being that for the past century an Indian woman called Mangala has been some-how using the malaria parasite to carry out mind-switches between bodies, to make herself immortal and to become the goddess of a deadly secret cult.

Antar recalls his last meeting with Murugan and the e-mail message Murugan sent him afterwards, which he erased without reading because Murugan was obviously cracked. He asks Ava to try and salvage the message. He wants to clear

up the background research and close the file because his attractive new neighbour, an Indian lady called Tara, promised to call round this evening.

Amitav Ghosh gives this remarkable conspiracy thriller a complex and effective time scheme, cutting between Antar's afternoon of electronic detective work, his conversation with Murugan in '95 and Murugan's visit to Calcutta shortly after. Stories told by Murugan and his friend Urmila take the narrative back further, to strange events at a railway station on the Ganges floodplain in the 1930s, and to Surgeon-Major Ross's Nobel-winning work on malaria at a Calcutta hospital in the 1890s.

It is an abnormally gripping and unsettling novel, most of it beautifully written. The railway ghost-story sequence is a mastery exercise in terror which will probably be anthologised as a classic alongside Dickens's *The Signalman*. Essentially the entire plot of *The Calcutta Chromosome* is hokum, but it is earnest, genuine hokum rather than the awful, arch, knowing, post-modern kind.

The scientific basis is not too far-fetched. Malaria research is still a cutting-edge discipline because of the parasite's weird shape-shifting abilities, and

the disease can have unexplained effects on the brain, which is why malaria injections were used to arrest syphilis until the 1940s. Murugan has only to add some plausible rubbish about DNA and the possibilities come to seem almost real.

The exact nature, methods and purpose of the conspiracy remain shadowy. An incompletely solved mystery is always unsatisfactory, but a pat solution would only be more so, as it is in conventional thrillers. Besides, Ghosh manages to create a lingering sense that, if you re-read closely enough, the truth will appear, and then you'll wish it hadn't.

The book is not without its faults. Murugan jumps to his crazy conclusions far too readily, and his account of Major Ross's work, in facetious American slang, is an embarrassing way of smuggling research in through dialogue. And Ghosh's principal assumption – that Ross, a Briton, could not have cracked the puzzle of malaria transmission in 500 working days from scratch without hidden help from the Indians who'd had 5000+ years to think about it – is of course wistful wish-fulfilment on the part of an Indian-born author.

Ghosh, resident in America, writes mainly for Indian and American readers, to whose sense of self-esteem the idea of British stupidity may appeal. So we won't mention Harvey, Jenner, Lister or Fleming, let alone Newton, Faraday, Trevithick, Babbage, Baird or Whittle. We'll simply admit we don't have many novelists as good as Ghosh just now, if any.

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French verbs and the face of Christ

Emma Goldman reviews a literary trio of alienation and dissipation

Three new first novels all explore, in different ways, the theme of alienation, the feeling of being cut off from life. In *American Studies* by Mark Merlis (Fourth Estate, £6.99) 62-year-old Reeve lies in hospital, after being beaten up in his apartment by a hustler. He parallels his downfall - his landlord is evicting him for the noise he made during the attack - with that of his old college mentor Tom Slater, a victim of the McCarthy witch-hunt. Through the ensuing story two homosexual "opposites" are explored: the slut and the ascetic, both of whom chase the same romantic, unattainable ideal, a love story with a fairy-tale ending stolen from the heterosexual world. This is the impetus for every short-lived relationship in the book, every one night stand; in the reasons for it lie the pain at the heart of the book.

In a telling early sexual encounter half a century before, Reeve's lover-to-be leads him through one of the farm sheds at night, to "a pile of rags: our marriage bed." The sanctity brought to mind by the symbol of the wedding night gives what follows an additional starkness. Reeve has dreamed of being the boy's "princess", of the boy, in turn, being his "knight". Afterwards, however, in the darkness, shame prevails. His lover looks at him "in evident distaste" and tells him that that he "mustn't tell anyone." But then something happens: in a sudden, surprising moment, the light of humanity breaks through.

Merlis tells a harsh tale and, though the childlike hopes of the dreamer never die, further encounters confirm a neurotic state: high romance locked in a partnership with dread. Merlis mirrors the outcast's position in the view from Reeve's hospital window: "a dismal vista of decaying tenements and forsaken churches..." The America of Reeve's lifetime, hating the homosexual, has largely made the homosexual hate himself.

Yet there are good relationships here too, and surprising ones: kindness and resilience endure, and although Reeve will not experience the same kind of tragedy as Tom, solidarity is to be found in unexpected quarters. This is a serious and haunting novel, deftly handled and written with poignant understatement. Merlis draws a vivid picture of a shameful period in American history.

Related by 16-year-old Grace Jones and set in a convent school in Ireland, Martina Evans's *Midnight Feast* (Sinclair Stevenson, £14.99) reveals what it is to be a troubled adolescent girl. Boys, unknown quantities, are darkly idealised, feared and given the most stomach-churning qualities. No fantasy is too macabre for the narrator and the relish with which she

describes a putative murderer hints that expressed dreads are, in reality, suppressed longings. The book powerfully captures the forceful nature of incipient sexuality - unrecognised and therefore unacknowledged - which can run amok in violent, melodramatic imaginings.

Evans knows that actual danger to a teenager's mind and body often goes unnoticed at any meaningful level. Emaciation is a hallowed state and the results, at first predictable and then horrific, are dismissed by emotional ignorance. The first and second-year girls, presented *en masse* and mostly off-stage, squeak in unison like the munchkins in *The Wizard of Oz* but, more usefully, provide a sort of unseen Greek chorus. They chant their French verbs through the classroom walls and are heard throwing up in the school lavatories - the latter activity is a lonely one, accompanied by the sound of the wind whistling down the cold, stone corridors.

Evans, a published poet, is a humorous and lyrical writer who has a Well-sian nose for a pithy description ("She looked like the sort of woman who ought to have a cigarette hanging out of her mouth"). Her first novel takes us inside the friendships - to all intents and purposes love affairs - between adolescent girls, but her talent lies in dialogue; nuns, schoolgirls, layabout teenage boys who hang around the town are all brought to instant life. The affection and sorrow that underpin this story must spring from the author's genuine love for her characters.

In *The Light of the Body* by Stephen Dunn (Duckworth, £14.99), the sense of exile is self-imposed. The 20-something, male narrator, having had a vision of the Face of Christ while working on the returns desk of the Public Library, elects to join a modern monastery. The resulting story combines an account of his time there with intermittent childhood flashbacks. Dunn's language, gentle as an April shower, perfectly matches the vernal setting and it takes a while before it dawns upon the reader that the name of his game is satire. The comic exchanges and courteous power battles among the monks are reminiscent of the sitcom, *Dad's Army*.

But the real, psychological reasons why the narrator joined the monastery are left unclear and the most successful characters in the book are the other members of his family: the radical, "gender-fuck" sister; the feather-brained mother; the "innocent dupe" of an army brother, and the father who, wordlessly staring at the television, has given up any chance of ever being able to understand his offspring. These scenes are the most alive in the book - within them lies the potential for another story.



"My nature is tragic and taciturn... When I was young, I went through periods of profound sadness... I'm a pessimist. I always think that everything is going to turn out badly. If there is something humorous in my painting... perhaps this humour comes from a need to escape the tragic side of my temperament." Joan Miró, the Catalan artist (1893-1983), was always aware of the relationship between his depressive nature and his art. He first became ill at the age of 18 when his father, determined to prevent his isolated son becoming a full-time artist, forced him to attend business school and work in a large chemical hardware store. In these unlikely conditions, Miró's artistic sense of humour apparently flourished - this painting, *Horse, Pipe and Red Flower* (1920), created just before he escaped parental control in 1921 to take up residence in his Paris studio, is a light-hearted and joyful study, a tribute to his Catalan roots. It is taken from *Depression and the Spiritual in Modern Art: Homage to Miró*, edited by Joseph Schildkraut and Aurora Otero (Wiley, £40).

Limp Lampitts' last bow

A N Wilson's *Chronicles* have come to the end of their run. Michael Arditti reports

Alan Clark would approve of Julian Ramsay, the central figure of A N Wilson's *Lampitt Chronicles*. For, as Wilson makes plain in the first pages of the fifth and final volume, *A Watch in the Night*, Julian is not a man who has had to buy his own furniture but rather has inherited it from several sources.

This initial information has deeper significance; Julian is not just a repository of other people's furniture but of their lives. He has stood in the shadow of the Lampitts, the eccentric aristocratic family with whom his path has crisscrossed since childhood, when his uncle's snobbish obsessions sent him down the Norfolk equivalent of the *Guernantes* way.

In later life, Julian is a dabbler, an unsuccessful novelist, an actor and a one-off radio playwright. His chief claim to fame is his 30-year stint on the *Archers*-like programme, *The Mulberry*. Now he hopes to revive his career with a performance of *Dear Time's Waste*, a play inspired by Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, at the private theatre of Stathe.

The *Sonnets* provide a metaphorical scheme for the book, in which various characters play out neo-Shakespearean roles. This is not the first time such imagery has surfaced in the *Chronicles*, but, here, the parallels are more extended: Kit, the latest scion of the Lampitts, is the Young Man; Dodie, a black actress somewhat improbably cast as the BBC's Margaret of Anjou, is the Dark Lady; and Hunter, Ramsay's Widmerpool, is the Rival Poet.

A Watch in the Night

by A N Wilson

Sinclair-Stevenson, £15.99

The two presiding geniuses of the *Chronicles* are clearly Proust and Powell: the former consciously cited in Julian's waiting for his mother's bedtime-kiss and in the name of his Bloch-like friend, Bloom; the latter recalled in the raffish social comedy of the minor literati, society ladies and club bores. Here, however, a third is added, Shakespeare, in what almost becomes "A Jig To The Music Of Time".

Wilson's views on Shakespearean production are less interesting than, say, his views on Catholic doctrine in *Hearing Voices* and, as a metaphorical framework, the *Sonnets* scheme is laboured. But the discussion of the atypical reality is an extension of the theme that has run through the *Chronicles*, namely the perception of truth and the distortion of writers, whether it be Hunter traducing James Lampitt for his own ends or St Paul mythologising Christ in the cause of evangelism. Shakespeare alone seems capable of universal sympathies and of the creation of characters open to infinite interpretation.

The Shakespeare Julian chiefly evokes is the poet of the *Sonnets* or the magician of *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream, but the Shakespearean work which *A Watch in the Night* most resembles is *Pericles*, as Julian drifts somewhat aimlessly through his final adventures. Wilson's achievement through the series, in terms of its social sweep and engagement with the major intellectual and metaphysical issues of the day, is immense, but, at the end, he runs out of steam. It is significant that the chief Lampitt connection here, Campbell Dilkes, a composer with Percy Grainger's taste for folk-songs and fascism, is merely a relation by marriage.

Dodie, Kit and the Gielgudesque actor Gorley Swallow are attractive additions to the *Chronicles* portrait gallery, but the potentially most interesting episode, Julian's encounter with latterday fascists, is skimmed. There is an obvious Proustian precedent in the climactic revelations of homosexuality, but *Hunter is no St Loup* and his sexual preferences have been clear since the steamroom in Book Three. Likewise, the truth about James Lampitt's murder is finally confirmed but as a mystery, it has long lost its force.

In an earlier volume, Bloom comments "the *flaw* novels have to be bloody lucky to make publishing sense... You pick up Volume Five or Volume seven and ask yourself, 'Who the fucking hell are all these people?'" This is particularly pertinent here where so many minor characters from earlier books are reintroduced that the second half almost resembles a curtain call. It is readers of the entire sequence who will offer the loudest applause.

Paperbacks

Reviewed by Emma Hagestadt and Christopher Hirst

The Smile of Murugan by Michael Wood (Penguin, £6.99) The TV historian's old-fashioned travelogue on the "seething, fecund" holy places of Tamil Nadu is a mixture of sympathetic observation, enchanted enthrallment and twaddle. His tour resulted from the predictions of an astrologer who said he would one day visit the temples of southern India. Surprise, surprise, four years later, he was back, following the exact itinerary forecast by the seer. Though Wood is beguiled by his style is so po-faced and bland that it is hard to maintain interest.

Sellout by James Adams (Penguin, £6.99) This book makes it plain why the FBI refers to the CIA as T-Bar (Those Bastards Across the River). Aldrich Ames, an alcoholic, yet highly-rated CIA agent, was America's Philby. In the nine years before his arrest in 1995, he revealed the identities of all the CIA's major sources in the USSR - at least 10 were killed as a result - along with every field agent. Though customarily stingy, the Soviets forked out \$2.7 million for his services. It was Ames' rash spending, including a Jag and a \$500,000 house, which proved his undoing. While no stylist, Adams unravels the yarn with great energy.

One Art: The Selected Letters by Elizabeth Bishop (Pimlico, £14.00) This unexpected literary bequest by a great, if overlooked poet is an unalloyed treasure, awash with sparkling intelligence and good humour. Though prone to alcoholism, her prose never falters and her judgements ("Dylan Thomas's poetry is... a straight conduit between birth and death - with not much space for living along the way") are spot-on. Not the least of the many pleasures here are the exotic locations, including Key West, Haiti and Brazil, where she lived for 15 years - though it is disappointing to learn that the euphonious Belo Horizonte is "the world's ugliest city".

Panama by Eric Zencey (Sceptre, £5.99) Despite the title, this addictive intellectual thriller is mainly set in Belle Époque France. Visiting Brittany, the American historian Henry Adams is smitten by expatriate painter Miriam Talbot. When she fails to keep an appointment in Paris, Adams discovers that she is embroiled in a vast embezzlement associated with the Panama Canal. Though the drowned body of Miriam Talbot turns up - it is not the woman Adams knew. Murky and twisting as a *rive gauche* alleyway, the story is given substance by immaculate period detail.

Seduction Theory by Thomas Beller (Abacus, £6.99) Thomas Beller's tales from the Upper West Side are just this side of slick. Focussing on the life and times of Alex Feder - a dumpy teenager who spends his afternoons baking chocolate eclairs in the Dakota building - the collection's other stories monitor the fragile progress of young lust: couples forced to negotiate happiness under the too bright New York sunshine, or in late-night cab rides back to the student dorm. A male Susan Minot, with, judging from his jacket photo, looks to match.

Dreamhouse by Alison Habens (Minerva, £6.99) Celia Small already has the roast beef in the oven, and her Laura Ashley dinner service on the table, when her flatmates decide to throw an alternative party of their own. Set over the course of one chaotic Saturday evening, Habens' exuberant first novel (which includes one of the best descriptions of a student kitchen ever written) tells how Celia's meal with the in-laws spills over into the psychedelic drug-fest going on upstairs. If you don't last the book, or the party, it could be that you are over 21. The *Young Ones* meets Lewis Carroll.

Burning your Boats by Angela Carter (Vintage, £8.99) Angela Carter first started writing short stories when she was "living in a room too small to write a novel in". These collected stories (which span the Sixties to her early death in 1992) show her early interest in folklore, fairy tales and the powerful properties of menstrual blood. Fearsome gothic masterpieces like "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Company of Wolves" sit happily beside the author's equally pleasing tales of dotty old ladies in Wandsworth. The perfect introduction to one of academia's favourite contemporary writers.

The Facts of Life by Patrick Gale (Flamingo, £5.99) A wonderfully readable family saga, Patrick Gale's latest novel kicks off with a war-time romance between a young Jewish TB sufferer and his fresh-faced English doctor. All is rosy for the couple until they set up home in a mysterious Fenland folly, where ill fortune seems to descend on them with the regularity of bad weather. Fifties movie stars, waspish dons and wise old women make up the supporting cast in a novel that is as straightforward as it is otherworldly - like reading Iris Murdoch without the puzzles.



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Plus: Peter Conrad on the *Punch* gravy train

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IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

country

Judging a best-kept village contest is a tricky business

It is easy to mock best-kept village contests – to describe people frantically white-washing coal, vacuum-cleaning the gutters, or launching midnight raids to dump refuse in the streets of bitter rivals.

Reality is different. Competition is keen, of course, but essentially good natured, and the effects are strikingly beneficial. Standards of upkeep are now so high that judges have a daunting task.

The trophy for Gloucestershire villages is the Bledisloe Cup, named after that great agriculturalist, the first Viscount Bledisloe; it was established in 1937, and is now organised by the local branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), with the help of a small sponsorship from Calor Gas. Entrants are divided into three categories: "small" means up to 300 inhabitants, "medium" between 300 and 1,000, and "large" from 1,000 to 3,000. The prize in each class is £100.

This year there were 49 entrants, and the initial task of sorting corn from chaff fell on 24 volunteer judges, who were asked to write reports on the villages they visited. In its excellent notes on how to judge, the CPRE makes the fundamental point that the aim of the competition is "not to find the most beautiful village, nor the most ancient, nor the most picturesque, just the one that is best cared for".

Architectural merit and a beautiful setting should therefore not be taken into account: what matters is evidence of community effort. Judges are told that they should give no warning of their arrival, but that once they are on site, it is up to them whether they remain incognito or start asking questions.

All this naturally applies also to the person – this year, myself – called upon to judge the final. By the time I joined the fray, entrants had been whittled down to two finalists in each category, and I was furnished with the villages' own submissions and with the reports of earlier adjudicators. All I had to do, therefore, was to inspect six villages.

The finalists knew the period during which they would be visited (17-25 August), but they did not know my identity. The chances of anyone rumbling me were thus minimal; but to reduce them to zero I decided to look as unofficial as possible by making my tours on a mountain bike.

Last Sunday afternoon saw me park outside the boundary of Oddington, a community of 340 souls just east of Stow-on-the-Wold, and a finalist in the medium category. Having extracted my bike from the

DUFF
HART-DAVIS

back of the car, I coasted down the slope into the village between neatly mown verges.

The place was immaculate: not a scrap of litter anywhere, not a blade of grass uncut. Flowers blazed in every garden, set off by the soft limestone of the houses and walls. There was – thank heaven – no tourist activity: in fact, no traffic at all.

I already knew, from the sketch map which the entrants had provided, that the village is strung out for nearly a mile, and almost cut in half by a wasp waist. I soon saw that the village hall is a rather nondescript modern brick building, looking out of place among the mellow stone.

But how was I to balance such minor disadvantages against the evidence of hard work and pride that I saw everywhere? How was I to discount the tremendous impression made by the Church of St Nicholas, an astonishing 11th-century building, leaning all ways, yet still in use, and set in a lovely graveyard, with roses planted along the path?

How, above all, was I to judge Oddington against its rival Longborough (pop. 420), no more than five miles away to the north-west? Longborough has a more enviable position, as it nestles on a hillside, with wonderful views far out over the plain. It is also more compact, which gives a stronger community feeling. Yet I knew from the rules that I must ignore these natural advantages and look for evidence of human effort. No shortage of that. The very large churchyard was quite beautifully mown (I am a connoisseur of such places, as I mow our own), the village hall and school in admirable order, the post office window cheerful. Altogether, the place had a flourishing air.

Over this weekend I must decide between the two – as I must between the butter-yellow hamlet of Batsford (pop. 50) near Moreton-in-Marsh and the larger, paler Cherington (pop. 100) near Tetbury. The two giants – Hardwicke (3,000, with its splendidly named Sticky Lane) and Highnam (2,000), on either side of Gloucester also need to be ranked.

I feel sad, almost guilty, that after such efforts three communities are bound to be disappointed.

Shaggy dog story

Lucinda Bredin meets Martha Stewart of canine couture

Summer is a sleepy time for the publishing world, but one book Knitting with Dog Hair has become a surprise cult hit. Only recently released, it has already gone into a second impression. From the title, it sounds another work of gritty Glasgow realism from the school of Irvine Welsh – until one sees the cover which has a dachshund wearing a tam o'shanter. Then the appalling truth dawns. This book is serious.

The writers of this small, but information-packed volume are Kendall Crolius, a senior vice-president of J Walter Thompson, and Anne Montgomery, a journalist for Town and Country. Inside is a complete guide to each stage in creating clothing from "a dog you know and love rather than a sheep you'll never meet" as the book puts it – from picking up the hairball under the sofa to spinning the yarn. At the back of the book are patterns for scarves, mittens and jumpers, with the finished results proudly modelled by the dog owners. There's even an exhaustive guide to which dogs provide the best yarn. Readers learn that the Rotweiler, "calm and intelligent by nature", has a very short, fine undercoat that can be spun when mixed with longer fibres. Or, as the book brightly suggests "you could simply sprinkle it in – but do make sure you have his full co-operation before you pick up your brush".

I felt I already knew Kendall, and indeed, her family, from the smudgy black-and-white photographs which are littered throughout the book. There's little Martha, her daughter, with mittens from a Samoyed puppy, Trevor, her eight-year-old son, in a jumper knitted from two-ply great pyrenees, and one must not forget Cynthia, Kendall's sister who models a "tam" made from Ollie. But when it was mentioned that Kendall was in London on a high-powered mission for JWT, I couldn't pass up the opportunity of meeting her.

In the publicity pictures Kendall Crolius and Anne Montgomery look apple-pie normal, rather than dog-crazed rustics, but I still wasn't expecting the perfectly manicured vision of corporate America that greeted me at the front door. Kendall was dressed in an elegant cream suit – exactly the sort of attire one could not wear anywhere near a dog. This was a bit confidence-defeating. Perhaps the whole project was merely a warped marketing ploy to sell more knitting needles.

This notion, however, was instantly knocked on the head. Kendall was only too happy to tell about the benefits of knitting with dog hair. This isn't just knitting. It's a cause.

The whole "dog-hair thing" as Kendall calls it, began 15 years ago, when she learnt how to spin. Kendall says this in an off-hand way, but the only excuse for an advertising executive to resort to spinning is watching Sleeping Beauty too many times. "Spinning is becoming increasingly popular," Kendall explained, "and I do like to master new skills." But why spinning, when one can buy wool from a shop? "Oh, it's not that I thought I'd need to make my family clothes, it's just that it is so fundamental. You can't go through a day without dealing with fibres. And it's very therapeutic. It forces you to relax, and the great thing about spinning is you can take it out on to the porch and the kids will come out and we'll tell stories."



Hair of the dog: Kendall Crolius with a sweater made from her "very dear friend Ollie"

Photograph: Glyn Griffiths

Knitting
with
Dog Hair

Better a sweater
from a dog you
know and love
than a sheep
you'll never meet



Knitting with Dog Hair by Kendall Crolius and Anne Montgomery is published by Hutchinson, £6.99

Blots on the horizon

Proposals to scrap restrictions on rural advertising hoardings will change the face of the countryside. By Emma Houghton

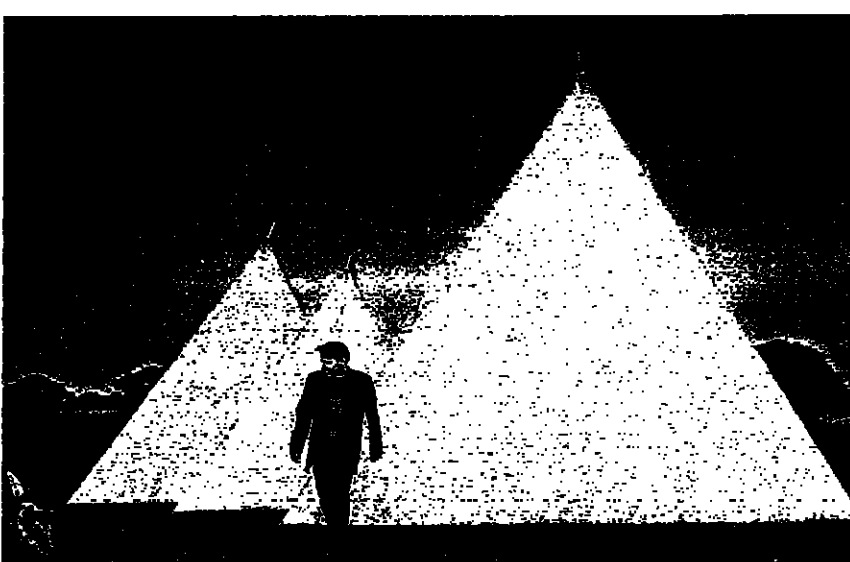
Anyone who happened to drive along the M5 near Burlescombe, Devon, in June could hardly have failed to notice an unusual addition to the scenery – three 20ft-high giant tea bags, erected in a nearby field to celebrate the launch of PG Tips pyramid tea bags.

Hardly the sort of thing you expect to see adorning rural roadsides, but for how long? Government plans to relax planning restrictions on outdoor advertising have prompted nationwide protest from conservation groups, planners and residents alike, all opposed to Britain developing the kind of advertising clutter common on French, Spanish or US roads.

"The government's proposals reveal an astonishing disregard for the great public support for strict control over advertising," says Neil Sinden, national planning campaigner for the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). "One of the CPRE's earliest successes was the removal of unsightly advertisements in rural areas, including poster hoardings along roads. Our current system of strict advertisement control is one of the greatest achievements of post-war planning."

Last year the Department of Transport swept away restrictions governing the brown tourist signs. These restrictions had ensured that only the larger tourist attractions would be signposted. "Now more or less any facility will qualify for these signs, including pubs and restaurants," says Mr Sinden. "The effect will be a large increase in the number of these notices."

Now the Department of the Environment (DOE) proposes to scrap the areas of Special Control of Advertising (ASCA), introduced in 1948 to prevent people filtering the countryside with advertising hoardings. ASCAs cover around half the country and provide controls by banning poster hoardings, requiring planning consent for illuminated signs, and limiting the size, design and location of any approved advertisements.



Giant pyramid tea bags erected in a Devon field last June. They were put up to mark the launch of a new PG Tips product

Photograph: Apex

However, following research commissioned by the DOE, the government has pronounced ASCAs out-dated and poorly maintained. Sinden agrees that ASCAs are flawed, but wants the government to take them more effective, even extending their levels of control.

"The proposals to abolish ASCAs send out the wrong signal about the government's intent to safeguard the countryside. If they go through we will undoubtedly see an extension of intrusive advertising into unspoilt rural areas."

Merlyn Williams director of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW), is equally worried. "ASCAs provided a backbone to councils facing local pressure – deregulation will make it much more difficult to maintain control. Some will stand up to the pressure and some won't. You could end up with huge variations in the number of signs in different districts."

He points out that rural areas have many businesses like guest houses and craft

shops tucked up little country lanes. "They all want signs on junctions of main roads to drag in passing trade, but that would create awful clutter and distract drivers. We have been fairly successful in resisting those, principally because of ASCAs. It's not so much that the restrictions give us power, but that we have confirmed areas of control."

South Lakeland is already seeing the effects of deregulating brown tourism signs. "In the last month we've had six new requests for signs – previously it would have been unusual to have had any," says Mr Ridgeway. "It's still early days. We expect that number to burgeon very quickly as people start to prepare for next season. The change in ASCAs on top of this could really cause quite a lot of damage to the countryside."

John Eaton is assistant director of planning at South Hams, Devon, which has 97 per cent of its district covered by an ASCA. "A lot of small businesses are fighting for survival and feel that the more ads they can put up the better," he says.

Mr Eaton believes the government will live to regret its latest move. "It's pointless locking the stable door after the horse has bolted, which is just what the government is trying to do with out-of-town retail developments."

Mid Devon, which covers the area of Burlescombe, where the tea bags were put up, is equally unhappy about the proposals. "If anything we want greater controls," says David Valentine, assistant director of development control. "Inevitably this will make things harder – at least ASCAs gave a bit of extra weight to any refusal."

But his concerns are not limited to the visual impact on the countryside. "I've driven along the roads on the Continent and you see these ads all over the place. It's very tempting to look, but that moment you take your eyes off the road could be the one moment you regret."

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صكزا من الاميل

North of the borders

Beyond Aberdeen, the rich patch of gardens you can visit look particularly good in August. By Anna Pavord

August in Scotland is a discouraging month for gorse, but for gardens there's no better time. The two are linked. For the last hundred years or so, Scottish head gardeners have been used to bringing their employers' acres up to a peak for the shooting season. Roses and herbaceous borders that are looking tired and dusty in England are at full tilt north of the border. Even heather there looks good. Go to Tillypronie, the Astors' shooting lodge at Tarland, to see how to make a heather garden. It's open tomorrow.

So is Dunoch House, which belongs to Viscount Cowdray. Here, a pretty, arched loggia, filled with 'Dorothy Perkins' ramblers, looks out over smooth lawns with a magnificent beech tree as its focus. Long, herbaceous borders, at least 15ft wide, stretch away from the house to end in a ha-ha with parkland beyond.

There's an other-worldliness about gardens such as this, impervious to fashion, immune to the constraints of visitor numbers. The borders move in a stately way through monkshoods and monardas, lime-green thalictrums and yellow daisies - all used in huge groups, as they need to be in gardens laid out on this scale. Clouds of pale pink salsola erupt at regular intervals along the right-hand border, with a wavy ribbon of tiny, pink-flowered roses trailing along in a separate, much narrower border in front.

On the west side of the house, the land rises in a series of terraces. A heather bank slopes up from the lawn to a wide walk thickly planted with rhododendrons.

The bulk of the 13-acre garden lies behind this bulwark of rhodos: grass paths mown between tall Scots pines with acers, hydrangeas, pieris, hohierias and a Hillierish collection of other woodland shrubs, some now rather crowded out by cypresses. They are coming out this winter, says the head gardener, Hooray. They are not trees that grow old gracefully.

The double herbaceous borders down the road at Crathes Castle were painted by George Elgood in 1904. He showed the famous yew hedges bulging in the background. The painting appeared in Gertrude Jekyll's book, *Some English Gardens*. Oops.

The yew hedges divide the four quarters of the top garden from the four quarters of the lower one. The famous double herbaceous borders run roughly from north to south between the oddly named camel garden (it's got a hump in it) and the trough garden. Long white borders run right the way across the garden from west to east. They are the least successful feature, which is a pity because they are the first thing you see as you come in by the present entrance, half-way down a side wall in the bottom half of the garden. It would be much better to come in centrally at the top, if the National Trust for Scotland could work out some way of doing it. The Trust acquired the property in 1951 from General Sir James Burnett who, with his wife, developed the present layout of the walled garden.

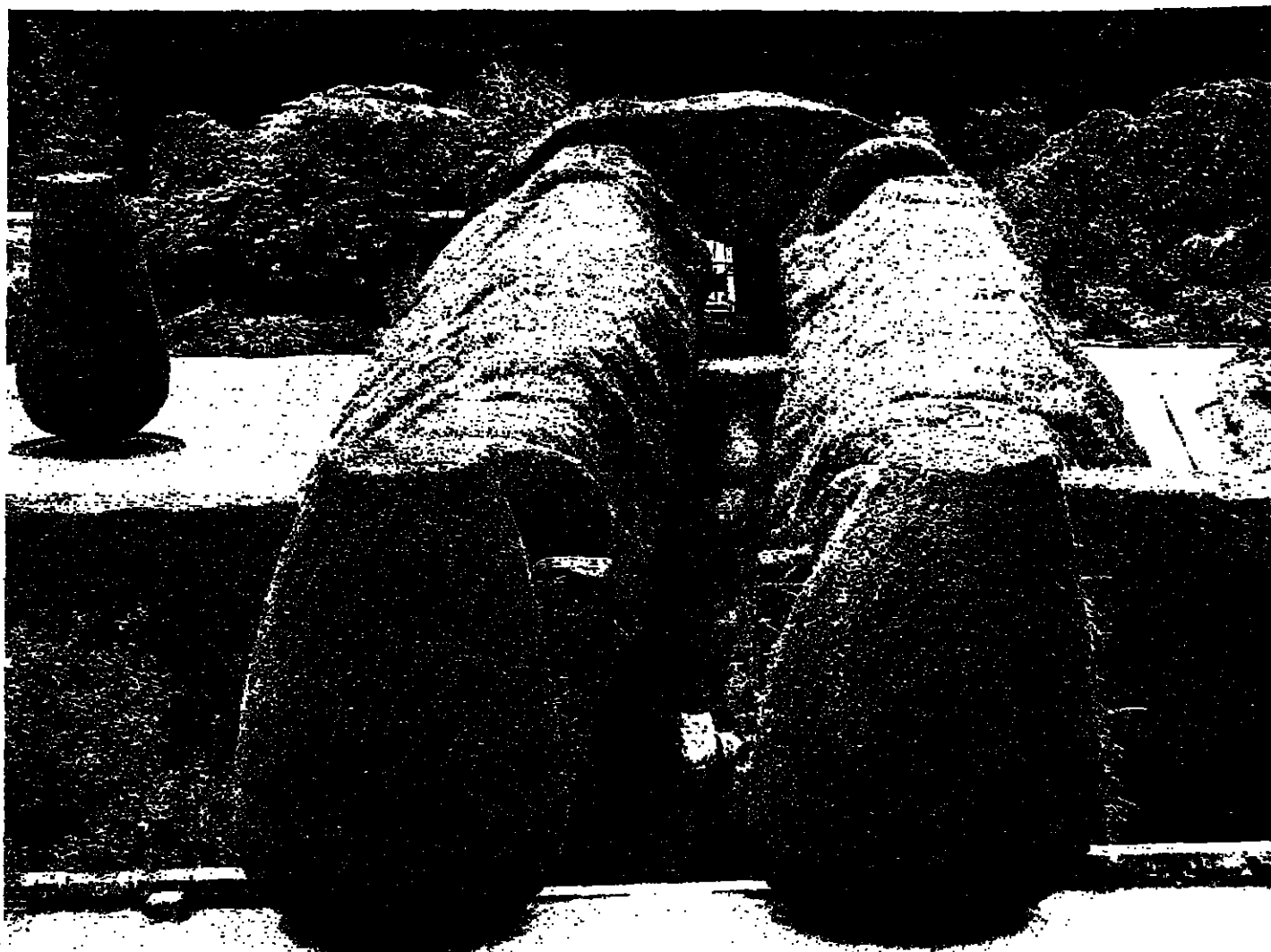
There's a lovely view from the raised terrace of the double borders, called the aviary border, by the big yew hedges. Here you look down, across and along the borders all at the same time and you don't get in the way of the video fanatics. There were an astonishing number of people at Crathes who seemed only to see the garden through the lens of a camera.

From the aviary border you can stroll down to the splendid Mackenzie and Moncur three-quarter span glasshouses, built against a south-facing wall of the garden. Actually, these are copies of the original turn-of-the-century range, but entirely convincing. The planting is rich and crowded: yellow-flowered abutilon, blue plumbago, big pots of Malmesbury carnations. The smell of the carnations is outrageously rich and wonderful, but they are hopeless flowers to look at, formless blobs that have forgotten whatever it was they set out to do.

The Fountain Garden on the upper level was at its peak. A box-edged parterre is laid out here around a fountain, the rest of the garden quietly grassed. The beds themselves are packed with blue-flowered annuals, mass planted, one variety to a bed. They had been very carefully chosen. There are five different kinds: cornflower, echium, convolvulus, nemophila and anchusa.

The cornflower was 'Jubilee Gem' (Suttons, 99p), dwarfish, but not too squat and thickly double. You can sow these in September for an early flowering next summer. If you want a later show, delay sowing until next April. The advantage of the September sowing is that you get much bigger, bulkier plants and they tend not to suffer so much from powdery mildew.

The nemophila, generally known as baby blue eyes (Thompson & Morgan, 99p) makes a much more spreading plant than the cornflower. They hate drought. My favourite of the five was the echium 'Blue Bedder' (Thompson & Morgan, 89p) alive with bees on its papery stiff flowers. The convolvulus was the startling navy blue 'Royal Ensign' (Mr Fothergills, 99p). The flaring trumpets have a central white star and a yellow eye. Least effective was the anchusa 'Blue Angel' (Suttons, 95p) only nine inches tall, the



Glorious for the 12th... and the rest of August: the venerable, bulging yew hedges of Crathes Castle

Photograph: Drew Farrell



CUTTINGS

John Douch writes from Wellingborough with advice about pigeons (*Independent* 27 July). "I have evolved a method that protects against them and against cats also," he says. "Surround the area to be protected with 5ft canes driven firmly into the ground at 6ft intervals. Stretch plastic, wide-mesh pea netting between them, as taut as possible at 6ins above ground level. This will deter both cats and birds. As the plants grow, raise the level of the plastic netting. Admittedly, cats can now get in and dig, but in my experience seldom bother once plants are growing well. I use this method for potatoes, legumes and brassicas. When hoeing is needed, the netting level may be raised without removing it, but quite often this operation can be carried out without disturbing the protection."

Every year for the last 18 years, a number of private gardens in the picturesque village of Walsham-le-Willows, Suffolk, have opened over the August Bank Holiday to raise funds for repairs to the village's 16th-century church, St Mary's. They vary from small neat cottage gardens to Italian gardens, potagers, sunken gardens, rose gardens and burgeoning vegetable plots. Homemade teas, an organ recital in the church and an art exhibition are also on offer. The 25 gardens are open tomorrow and Monday from 11.30am-6pm. Admission £3.50. Children free.

WEEKEND WORK

In hot, dry weather, remember your camellias, especially if they are growing in pots. Flower buds are being initiated now for next spring's display. If the plant is too dry, it will not have the strength to produce these buds.

Weeds can be brought to heel with a dose of Tumbleweed, but use total weed killers, such as this, on the calmest of days when there is no danger of spray drifting on to other plants. If you are fighting horsetail, trample it lightly underfoot before spraying. Bruising increases the rate at which the plants absorb the herbicide.

Well-established hedges of beech, hornbeam, privet and yew should be clipped this month. Box, holly, laurel and Leyland cypress should also be tackled if necessary. If you leave the clipping of these much later, new growth will be cut back by frost.

Herbaceous geraniums should have been cut hard back by now. They will produce fresh mounds of leaves, which will look rather better than the floppy specimens lolling about now. If you are lucky, they may even flower again.

Remove the old foliage from strawberry plants when they have finished fruiting and weed around plants. Raspberry canes also need sorting out. Cut out all those that have fruited and thin out the new canes, getting rid of any spindly ones. Tie in the new canes to wires.

Cut out old, flowered growths of rambler roses as soon as the blooms have faded. Tie in the new sappy growths, fanning out the stems as much as possible if the rose is trained on a wall.

A taste of the Continent

Patricia Cleveland-Peck reports on an innovative exchange scheme for gardeners

Find it easiest to remember the names of plants you can eat. Elisa Hanrot, the latest participant in the National Trust's innovative Gardener's Exchange Scheme was explaining to me how, at her college in France, each student is given a small piece of land to cultivate throughout the four-year course. As the college is situated in the Potager du Roy, or King's Kitchen Garden, at Versailles, Elisa decided to fill her parcels with edible plants.

At Upton House, the National Trust garden to which she has come on a three-week exchange, Elisa has found no lack of edible plants. Upton not only has a tradition of fruit production but, at the very heart of the dramatic pleasure gardens, one of the loveliest walled vegetable gardens in the country. Espaliered fruit trees cover the walls and rows of berries and vegetables form a magnificent tapestry. This one-acre kitchen garden produces enough fresh fruit and vegetables to sell to the visiting public.

The Potager du Roy, on the other hand, extends over 18 acres. It was created for Louis XIV by draining a marsh and establishing a micro-climate in which even exotic subjects like sago palms could survive. Figs, of which the King was inordinately fond, abounded. The layout of this garden remains the same today although it is now occupied by the Ecole Nationale Supérieure du Paysage of which Elisa is a second-year student.

Most of the participants in the Gardener's Exchange Scheme are professional head gardeners, so as a landscape architecture student Elisa has not had as much hands-on experience as most of them. "I wanted to get experience of working in an English garden," she said. "Here at Upton I also have the advantage of seeing how an old garden can be managed for the public."



Elisa Hanrot from Versailles helps to clear mares' tail from the lower lake at Upton House Photograph: Patricia Cleveland-Peck

During my visit, Elisa was helping to clear Upton's lower lake of mares' tail, a job that involved going out in a boat to scythe the weed below water level and then pull it in to the land. Wet and smelly it may have been, but the lake rang with laughter and good natured European co-operation which would have been the envy of Brussels.

This, of course, is the aim of the exchange scheme. It was the brainchild of Tim Wilson, managing agent of the National Trust's Severn Region, who felt such exchanges of information and expertise between gardeners who do not often have the chance to travel, would produce benefits all round.

The Scheme kicked off in 1994 with an exchange between Neil Cook from Hanbury Hall in Worcestershire and the head gardener of the Boboli Gardens in Florence. Two further exchanges took place last year in France. Peter Dennis from Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire visited Serre de la Madone in Menton, a garden of great interest to him as it was designed by Lawrence Johnston, the owner of Hidcote. Paul Delaney from

Farnborough Hall in Oxfordshire, exchanged with Jean-François Breton who for 20 years has been in charge of the Orangerie at the Jardins du Luxembourg in Paris. Conditions vary but in most cases the fares and some of the living costs are funded by charitable trusts and the gardeners receive the same basic wage as their counterparts.

Encountering previously unknown tools and methods is part of the fun of the scheme. As for Continental

reactions to British gardens: "I like the idea that you can buy a book and then go off and visit these National Trust Gardens and know that each will be different but all will be of a good standard," said Elisa. "In France visiting gardens is only beginning, but maybe one day we'll start an organisation like this."

Upton House gardens near Banbury, are open Sat-Wed (including Bank Holiday Monday), 2-6pm. Admission £4.80

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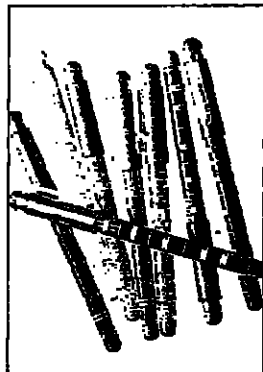
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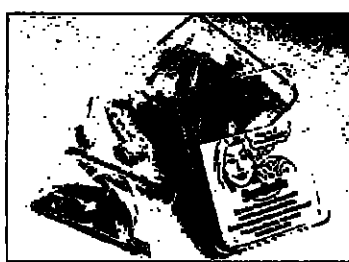
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Crystal Tips from Clapham Junction: Noelle Bohorquez, whose crystal necklaces were featured last weekend, now runs a personal mail order service. Contact her on 0171-238 2061.

Cactus juice and cashmere throws:

It's amazing how many of us lose our shopping savvy the minute we step off a plane and onto unfamiliar tarmac. But if you take a little time to think about what you like and sidestep the beaten track, you can bring back something you'll keep for longer than the time it takes your tan to fade. Take a tip from the movers and shakers of the design world who, unlike many of us, venture beyond the confines of Duty Free more than once a year, and can spot a souvenir worthy of note from 100 paces. These are the people who spot the trends, search out the exotic and shape what we buy for our bodies and homes. Kara O'Reilly asked 10 style gurus what they seek out whenever they head away from home

Simon Alderson: Along with his partner Tony Cunningham, Simon began selling original 20th-century furniture by the biggest names in Modern Design from a stall in Camden Market. They've upgraded to a shop at 274 Upper Street, NI (0171) 288 1996.

"I sell things for a living, so when I go away I don't actively shop – I'm more interested in seeing the places I go to. However, if I was in New York and a piece of furniture by George Nelson that I didn't already own happened to fall in front of me, then I'd buy it. He's my favourite American designer and I'd really love one of his Marshmallow sofas. Repros are now available but I want an original with all its charm and pedigree."



Anouska Hempel (Lady Weinberg): Designer and hotelier. Owner of Blakes Hotel, in London. Her latest hotel The Hempel will open later this year. Blakes, 33 Roland Gardens, SW7 (0171 370 6701).

"I go anywhere and everywhere in the world and I always look for the main street and market and always with shopping in mind, but no list. I don't look for specific things but I look for my couture shop, design team, Blakes, The Hempel. I look for everything and nothing. I try to keep an open mind, but I do prefer shopping in the country of origin – Armani in Milan is different from London, as are Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. I look for anything that catches my eye in a foreign country, not just when I'm on holiday, but when I'm travelling anywhere. My recent best buy was a cashmere shawl to go over the bottom of the bunk in the boat. The colour was perfect and not something I expected to find in the middle of summer in Sardinia."



Bill Amberg: Started off designing gorgeously soft leather bags and has expanded to leather walls, floors and furniture. His shop at 10 Chepstow Road, Notting Hill Gate (0171 727 3560) is opening at the beginning of September.

"When I'm away I usually stock up on food, so this summer in Spain I bought ham, and in France, foie gras and so on. Whenever I go somewhere sunny I buy whatever the local market throws up – oils, jams, jellies. You can usually find pretty strange things when you're away, curious objects like dried iguanas. I also buy bags. I'm interested in looking at the different shapes of baskets and the way people carry things, or tie things up to carry them – I have used some of these ideas in my work. I've really fallen in love with some fabric sarongs which I use all the time. Some are from Tanzania, some from Indonesia, I pick them up wherever I see them. They're the best alternative pyjamas, and I wear them around the house."



"I always go to the markets in Paris like Chignancourt to see what's new. I'm in New York I often go to the big department stores like Barneys to see if they've got anything of interest. I go to the big Army and Navy store there to check out the workwear, and I like to go into snowboarding shops because I love the materials and I think the detailing on the clothes is great. That look has been very influential."

Anya Hindmarch: Purveyor of exquisitely beautiful handbags to the fashion cognoscenti. 91 Walton Street, SW3 (0171 584 7644).

"It's always exciting to buy things that you can't get anywhere else. I love New York for weird stocking fillers, especially 'nerdy' drug store things such as tooth-whitening paste and sour ball drops. Visine eye drops, Carmex lip balm, Maybelline mascara, Hanes T-shirts. Kiehls was a wonderful find before it came over here – it's a very unusual, rich, but not at all greasy, hand cream. This summer I went to one of my favourite shops, a little place behind the market in St Tropez which sells brilliant kids' shoes: little mini Tods, tiny flat ballet pumps, espadrilles which lace around the ankle; I also love Duane Reed – a drug store in New York, and any foreign flea markets."



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shopping

Six of the best towelling

Stylist: Jill Warwick. Photographer: Tony Buckingham



1 Strappy sundress, £50.50, Armand Basi. This season towelling has featured in designer collections from Chanel to Nicole Farhi and can be found in abundance on the high street. This spaghetti-strap navy towelling sundress is taken from this season's 'tango' collection by Spanish designer Armand Basi, who is currently experiencing a revival in London. Now retailing at half the original price, the dress is available from his flagship store, Armand Basi, 12 Floral Street, London WC2 and Wardrobe, 53 Deansgate, Manchester, for enquiries call: 0171 278 4843.

2 V-neck top, £40, Komodo. Towelling's popularity is unsurprising: it is both comfortable, practical and relatively cheap, and it makes a perfect holiday companion as it can be squeezed into the smallest suitcase without creasing. This red and white V-neck long-sleeve top by Komodo is no exception, also available in white with a red contrasting stripe and in sky blue and navy for men. Komodo, 65 Monmouth Street, London, WC2 and Cult Clothing branches nationwide, for enquiries call: 0171 379 5225.

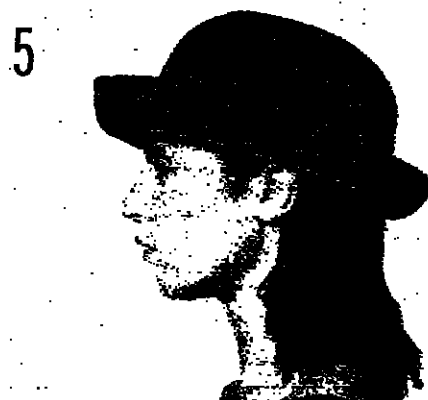
3 Floral mules, £55, Red or Dead. The high-street label renowned for funky street and club wear, was quick to spot the bathroom staple's potential, and these floral towelling mules clearly bring this notoriously kitsch fabric into the 90s. Available in white (as pictured) navy and red. Red or Dead from 33 Neal Street, Covent Garden, London WC2 and branches nationwide for enquiries call: 0171 937 3137.



4 Duffel bag, £12.99, Debenhams. Although just as stylish off the beach as on it, towelling is still primarily used to dry the body. This striped towelling duffel bag, with matching towel, combines the fabric's original use with its current fashionable status, to create a versatile accessory. The soft pile towel is big enough to lie on or to use as a screen for changing on a busy beach. While the matching rucksack doubles as a shopping or shoulder bag. Debenhams, 334-348 Oxford Street, London W1 and selected branches nationwide for local stockists and enquiries call: 0171 408 4444.

5 Towelling hat, £19.95, Kangol. Proof that this feel-good fabric has come a long way from the humble bathrobe comes from the hat giant Kangol, who has used its soft, cool properties to create three different styles in their summer collection. This pull-on brimmed towelling hat is also available in white, royal blue, navy, black and orange. Major department stores, enquiries call: 0171 487 4888.

6 Towelling two-piece, £27, Betty Jackson. The plunging neckline is inspired by 50s Hollywood beach babes, Marilyn Monroe and Betty Grable. Fashion has seen a return to beach wear and especially the halter neck top. This one comes with cute matching shorts, and is currently on sale at half price. Betty Jackson, 311 Brompton Rd, London SW3, for local stockists and to check availability call: 0171 589 7884.

The thing about...
storage

Storage: the very word is un-sexy. It has that deathly ring of solemnity. And yet it's one of those inevitabilities that gradually creep up: one day you buy a pencil case, the next thing you're leafing through catalogues trying to find the perfect way of organising your drill bits.

The thing about storage is that, despite the fact that it's as inevitable as late trains, few serious improvements have surfaced over the past couple of centuries. The situation in many houses around the country has reached crisis point with home-working, spare-rooms lie knee-deep in paper these days for want of a filing cabinet that doesn't look like a filling cabinet. I still don't understand why even those cabinets where some attempt at disguise has been made have to have label

holders. The average punter needs no more than two drawers. What are you supposed to put on the labels? "Top Drawer" and "Bottom Drawer?"

Storage divides into two categories: the absolutely useless and the absolutely expensive. The primary considerations of storage are that it should only take up space that is either occupied or redundant, that it should be instantly accessible, that it should protect your belongings from dust and that it should spare you from having to look your cleaning products in the eye. Storage space is completely wasted if putting things into it is hard work.

Every company producing "ideas" seems to fall into at least one of these traps. Even The Holding Company (slogan: "Who says storage

can't be fun?"), which launched a mail order catalogue last November (free on 0171-610 9160), is filled with fabric-covered boxes, retailing between £10.50 and £22.50. IKEA do their own paper-covered cardboard versions at £7.50 for two and £10.50 a pair in metal. And you know what? They all open at the top, which means that stacking is a complete no-no. How many times have you been tempted by those ubiquitous primary coloured mini-dustbins? Same problem, only they clash with everything as well.

"Fun", in many cases, seems to consist of varying the materials used. Actually, you can't beat wood or metal. Cardboard scuffs in no time; those sisal baskets look great until they've accrued a buildup of grime in their rough surfaces. Wicker actually seems to

attract dust. Lakeland Plastics' Storage Solutions catalogue (015394 88100) is great on kitchen stuff, but filling your bedroom with a thousand takes on 'lupperware is the kind of thing you do in the grip of depression. Califio, fabric of the decade, looks great for about five minutes. After that, it sags.

There is, of course, a simple solution. You could always throw things away, or give them to a charity shop. Treat your belongings as though you're going to disappear tomorrow and your relations are going to get stuck with sorting your stuff out. Those photographs of Marbella will probably end up in the bin, you know. Might as well put them there before someone else does.

Serena Mackesy

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Miles Tea: the best drink of the holiday

Mike Prestage meets the man whose home brew is regarded as a regional delicacy

It's at this time of year that holidaymakers in the Somerset resort of Minehead begin contacting local tea blender Derek Miles to ensure if the decent cup of tea they have enjoyed during their stay can be found nearer home. Happily, the answer is yes, as these regular requests prompted Derek to offer his blended teas by mail order.

Locals, who can buy Miles tea over the counter, hail it as a great regional luxury. High praise, but a bit strong for the modest Mr Miles. "The basic blend isn't that different from the major companies," he explained, "but we like to think that because we blend and buy on such a small scale we can be very selective with the teas we buy. That is our strength."

The firm produces a small range of speciality teas like Earl Grey, China and Darjeeling but it's the breakfast blend which Mr Miles started with over 30 years ago that makes up the bulk of the business. A traditionalist at heart, Mr Miles would prefer to sell only loose tea, and the rise of the tea bag does not really mesh with his approval. "We do produce them - and it is the major part of our business - but at home I still use loose tea. The tea bag is not something I particularly like, but nowadays everything is about convenience."

Mr Miles comes from an old Midlands' tea dynasty begun by his grandfather, Henry Miles in 1888. He himself learnt the trade at the London tea market before moving to work at the port of Avonmouth - then the major port of import for tea - to work as a tea inspector, checking the quality of the tea as it arrived in chests from India, China and East Africa.

At the same time he began blending his own



Mr Miles in the tasting room

Photograph: Apex

brand of tea from the front room of his cottage. Using up to 14 individual varieties of leaf, Mr Miles would weigh out his personal blends against an old sipping in a set of apothecary's scales. The success of his tea was such that by the time bulk containers had replaced tea chests, and the importers had switched from Avonmouth to the east-coast, Mr Miles' tea blending could become a full-time affair.

In the early days he would blend ten chests of tea a week. Now, having bought the old family firm with a partner, his company Henry Miles and Co blends 120 chests a week. Apart from a major new operating centre and a larger staff, little has changed. "For the basic breakfast tea I have stuck to the blend I started out with - using Assam and East African teas," he says. "In an ideal world you would blend with local water so there would be regional variations, but that's not possible."

Even if there is little variation in taste Mr Miles

will be tasting nearly every day, trying tea samples sent from brokers. Because the quality on individual plantations varies at different times of the year there is a lot of fine tuning to ensure that standards are maintained.

The tasting room is filled with little boxes - 120 in all - which contain the tea samples from which the blends will be made. These match the 2,000 chests of tea stored in the warehouse which will be mixed when the final formula is decided upon. Water from a specially-made copper kettle is poured onto the standard amount of tea - it is always balanced against the sipping - and is left to infuse for exactly six minutes. Then it is sucked to the back of the palate before being deposited in a spittoon. The leaves are also inspected.

"As a general rule if there is a bright coppery infusion when you examine the leaves it is a good tea and if it has a greenish infusion it is poor quality," he explained as he tested the blends that will be on the production line in seven weeks time.

The skill is ensuring that though the quality of the tea leaves may vary, the packets leaving the warehouse taste the same on the palate all year-round. The essential rituals that have remained unchanged since the time his grandfather was blending are part of the art.

"It is still a very gentlemanly occupation, where trust and word of honour count for a great deal," he said. "Many involved in the industry have come from families with a long background in tea. Personally, while I shall probably try to ease my way out, I really don't want to give up. It's fascinating and there is always something more to learn."

Miles Tea mail order: 01643-703993

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This week two children disappeared from an unsupervised beach. Deborah Jackson asks for a safer seaside

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COLETON FISHACRE HOUSE, Devon

A lifestyle found only in fantasy

By Linda Cookson



Spirit of the
Twenties:
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In 1925, Rupert D'Oyly Carte – heir to the fortune of his famous impresario father – was sailing round Devon's South Hams coastline with his wife, Lady Dorothy. From the deck of their yacht they spied a glorious enclave of land rippling down to the sea, and with the élan that comes a whole lot easier if you happen to be extremely rich, they decided on the spot to buy the valley, build their country home there and create a beautiful garden.

Which is what they did. In 1982, Coleton Fishacre, the estate they created, was taken over by the National Trust, and its 25 acres of sub-tropical gardens were opened to the public. But the house itself – lovingly restored to its former glory – could be visited only by private appointment.

Now, with the arrival of tenants Brian and Susan Howe, formerly proprietors of a popular country hotel in the Cotswolds, the house has become more accessible. There are five double-bedrooms to let – all with sea-views and private bathrooms. For visitors, the feeling is one of having travelled backwards through time.

The building is magnificent. The architect was Sir Oswald Milne, a pupil of Lutyens, and his team worked with astonishing speed using stone quarried from the estate itself. By 1926, only a year after the D'Oyly Cartes' first sighting of the valley from the sea below, Coleton Fishacre House had risen like a liner from the rolling green waves of the surrounding countryside.

The motif of sea-faring is integral. The main reception room is dominated by a painting of a Twenties Blue Star liner. The period décor gives the elegant ambience of a luxury cruise ship. In the library, a wind-detector hangs above the fireplace, so that neither Rupert nor Lady Dorothy had any need to venture out of doors before deciding whether or not to go sailing. The high-tide clock in the lobby outside served a similar purpose (although this had to be operated manually by the butler).

Down at the bottom of the gardens, in Podcombe Cove, a sunken swimming pool filled up with each high tide. By the time the tide had receded, the water was suitably warmed for guests to bathe in. Still on the nautical theme,

the ship's bell hanging on the balcony would summon them home for dinner.

Part of the fascination of Coleton Fishacre is this evocation of a lifestyle familiar to most of us only from novels. (Unsurprisingly, a film on Agatha Christie was shot there recently.) You also experience the interesting illusion of actually getting to know the D'Oyly Cartes themselves. I began to feel almost fond of them. In the library, they are pictured on a 1927 map of the area, Lady Dorothy is painting contentedly in the gardens, a spotted dog in attendance. Rupert (equally contentedly, one imagines – alas) is shooting rabbits.

A decade later, the curtain fell abruptly on the idyll. In 1936 their 21-year-old son was killed driving his sports car in the South of France. The D'Oyly Cartes' marriage foundered. Lady Dorothy left for Tobago to pursue a spectacularly unsuccessful career as a gambler. And then came World War Two.

If you are visiting Coleton Fishacre and want to push the boat out, stay in the master bedroom. This was the D'Oyly Cartes' own room, and has a fantastic double aspect over water gardens and charming magnolia-lined walk-

ways. It costs £37.50 per person per night. The other rooms start at £28.50, and all of them have enormous character. Two, for example, have original period bathrooms, with huge semi-sunken baths and hand-painted tiling depicting gentlemen and ladies engaged in a range of genteel sports pursuits.

Brian and Susan Howe have worked hard to create a family atmosphere at Coleton Fishacre. If you want a conversation opener, ask them how they came to be the last couple before Prince Andrew and Fergie to be married at the high altar of Westminster Abbey.

As a former chef, Brian Howe is happy to cook an excellent three-course evening meal for guests by arrangement at £20 per head. However, he did not throw a culinary tantrum when I said I only wanted an omelette. (Nor, I am glad to say, did he charge me £20 for it.) Meals can be eaten with other guests at the large Milne-designed table in the dining room overlooking the garden, or you can opt for the privacy of your own room or the library. Breakfast is included in the room prices.

Above all, guests fall for the place's calm and sense of history. Almost any object in the house

– even the more recent acquisitions – seems to have a tale to tell. For instance, a casual enquiry about a signed photograph of Sir John Betjeman on the wall elicits the fact that Susan Howe spent a brief period in the early 1970s as his personal assistant. She was warned before her interview that he might be a touch difficult, and arrived to be greeted by the Laureate complaining fretfully that Archie, his teddy bear, had had a heavy day travelling up from Cornwall and was required to go to the opera with him that evening. Was it fair to tire him out even further? asked the poet. Nonsense, said Susan briskly. There were two whole hours to go. Pop Archie off to bed for a nap, and he'd be bright as a button in time for the show.

She got the job.

Coleton Fishacre House, Kingswear, Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 0EQ (01803 752683). Prices from £28.50.

Until the end of October the gardens are open to the public Wed-Sun 10.30am-5.30pm. Entrance £3.10 (National Trust members free).

HOTEL DEPARTURES

Hilton hotels (0800 856 8000) All 41 UK hotels in this chain (from Bath to London, Warwick and Edinburgh) are running weekend offers. These include three-night specials costing £22.68 per person per night, and four nights for the price of three (excluding London).

Thistle Hotels (0800 33 22 44). Children under 16 can stay for free if they share a room with two adults, under sixes also get free meals. Other special deals include £42 a night at the Strathallan and Apollo hotels in Birmingham – breakfast and free admission to the Cadbury World Experience are part of the offer. At Liverpool's Atlantic Tower, £83 for two nights' B&B also takes in a Magical Mystery tour of Beatles sights. Throughout September, tours of Buckingham Palace can be made from the Royal Westminster and the Grosvenor hotels in London. Prices for two nights' accommodation start at £159. In Manchester, Coronation Street fans can pay £100 for two nights' B&B at the Portland Hotel and get a day ticket to the Granada Studios.

Those looking for a break in the fast lane should head for Donington, where two nights at the Brands Hatch Thistle costs £210, while one night at the Donington Thistle is £140 – both prices include breakfast and dinner and the chance to do some racing driving at Brands Hatch or Donington Park Racing Circuit. If you're after a more peaceful time, try Sutton Coldfield's New Hall, a 12th-century moated manor house where 20th-century champagne breaks cost £110 per person (the price is for one night and includes champagne reception, four-course dinner with wines, and breakfast). Meanwhile at Stratford-upon-Avon, the Arden hotel has a two-night theatre package starting at £145. This includes a visit to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, a visit to Anne Hathaway's Cottage, a five-course candlelit dinner and a four-course pre-theatre dinner as well as breakfast.

Forte hotels (0345 404040). A "Weekaway" deal offers 20 per cent off stays of five nights or more during September and October at more than 90 of Forte's 160 UK hotels (from large "Heritage" hotels to coaching inns and modern, family-oriented Posthouses). From 25 October to 3 November, Family bonus breaks – two children under 16 stay free in their parents' room – are available at a number of Forte Posthouses.

Queens Moat Houses (01325 509955). At Oakley Court in Windsor, a Family Weekend costs £208 per adult and £58 per child when children share their parents' room. The offer includes two nights' half-board accommodation and entry to Legoland and Windsor Castle. Oakley Court has been a suitably spooky location for hundreds of horror films and it now arranges a special Halloween Weekend on 2 and 3 November. The cost of £149.50 per person for two nights' breakfast includes a themed dinner followed by a screening of horror movies throughout the night.

Meanwhile at the Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington you can take a step back in time to the early 1900s. On a History Weekend you get a chance to ride a tram, see how pitmen and farmers worked, go down a coal mine, explore the old shops, and visit the Beamish Open Air Museum. The cost is £114 per person for two nights' half board.

Swallow hotels (0191 419 4545). Special autumn "Breakaways" cost between £110 and £116 for two nights at any of the 35 hotels in this chain – from the top-of-the-range Swallow Hotel in Birmingham to the Three Tuns, a former 16th-century coaching inn in Durham.

Alexandra Cockburn

HOTEL DE PARIS, Norfolk

Dowager amongst the Victorian clutter

By Simon Calder

The name, and more particularly its pronunciation in a slightly quizzical Norfolk drawl, sums up the Hotel de Paris – dee Parree, if you please. If not the queen of hotels, then she is a dowager standing out among the Victorian clutter on the seafront in Cromer. Like a much-loved aunt, or an old liner that has so far escaped the scrapyard, she is wilfully enjoying the graceful decline that comes with age.

Boldly placed at the centre of the seafront, opposite the time-battered pier, the Hotel de Paris resonates with a sense of grandeur that perhaps reverberates from the royal residence, just inland at Sandringham.

All the beautiful Art Nouveau touches are still in place in the spacious lobby, (as are some of the original staff, judging by appearances). The 20th century has (so far) failed to crush the delicacy of detail, with elaborate swirls of wood and plaster above, preposterously neo-Roman mosaics below.

I paid £22 for a single room, which was the oddly crooked shape you sometimes get when travelling on your own – a room that is a cross between an L and a K. It was comfortable enough, with a television that you didn't have to put 50 pence in to coax it into life, and the makings of what Indian hotels call bed-tea.

The slouch who stays abed misses out on the goings-on in the lobby. Sipping your tea in bone-china cups, you can eavesdrop on the staff recalling the last significant event at the



The Hotel de Paris – grandeur at a very reasonable price

hotel, the day a couple of Easters ago when the BBC radio car broke down in the car park and had to be taken back to base by the AA. Sitting back in a venerable armchair, listening to the North Sea beating the pier, you would not be in the least surprised to meet

Agatha Christie or some mischievous young Royals. And, best of all, it is almost as cheap as that bed-and-breakfast down the road.

Hotel de Paris, Jetty Cliff, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9HG (01263 513141). From £22

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PLUMBER MANOR, Devon

More a restaurant with bedrooms

By Geoff Spink

As country houses go, it isn't what you would call "imposing", but everything about Plumber Manor (the "b" is pronounced) is rather understated, which is all part of the charm. Everything that is, apart from the cooking, and that is played with heavy percussion in a major key, to the extent that the more faint hearted will want to withdraw, reaching for the gastronomic equivalent of earplugs.

To spend a weekend in this Dorset hotel is rather like going to visit some well-heeled country cousins: you expect hospitality rather than grovelling servitude. The house, (a Jacobean construction built by an ancestor of the present owners, the Pridemans-Brunes), seems entirely appropriate to its Hardy-esque setting. Built of the local fudge-coloured stone, it seems to squat down and blend with its surroundings, rather than trying to draw attention to itself.

On arrival, you will be met not by armies of liveried footmen eager to whisk away your bags, but by a tweed-skirted housekeeper who, while quite happy to show you to your room, certainly doesn't intend to do herself an injury with your largest suitcase. The somewhat haphazard décor - the Manor has been untouched by the hand of the corporate interior designer - adds to the homely feel. Our bathroom sported large flowery patterned wallpaper, tiles of an unrelated colour and design, and yet another floor covering. The medicine cabinet looked like MFI circa 1973.

The distinct nip in the air was apparently due to the fact that the plumbing had broken down. It would hopefully be restored within an hour. We were assured that we could move to the converted barn if things did not improve; but in the event pipes soon rumbled and gurgled contentedly, and there was enough hot water to fill the more than ample bath, albeit with something that looked like stewed tea.

If your idea of service is to have the entire staff dance attendance on you all weekend then, here again, you will be disappointed. Room service is more a matter of negotiation than policy: a request for a couple of pre-dinner gin and tonics resulted in a jovial, "Well, I think we might run to that".

Plumber is, first and foremost, a culinary experience. While one Prideman-Brune, Brian, works his magic in the kitchen, his brother, Richard, weaves his way among the expectant diners, dispensing menus, wine lists and good humour. He is out-classed only by his sidekick, Bertie, who wanders around the sitting-room, making sure everyone receives his attention in equal measure and watching the door for new arrivals. He should, you almost feel, be wearing black tie, except that black Labradors seldom do.

The menu is a three-course affair, with an optional fish course if you think you'll have room. Starters range from an aromatic, thick watercress soup, a subtle smoked trout pâté wrapped in smoked salmon, a surprisingly light lobster lasagne, to stuffed, boned quail in filo pastry. The fish course, an escapee of salmon with cream and green peppercorns, was a little heavy as an intermediate fish course. Main courses are substantial and accompanied by a generous variety of fresh and crunchy vegetables -



Plumber Manor is first and foremost a culinary experience

Photograph: Christopher Jones

mange-touts, carrots, broccoli, and two types of potatoes. The guinea fowl was superbly complemented by its black cherry and cinnamon sauce, while medallions of beef with shallots were enough to make you forget about BSE. My favourite, though, was the roast barberry duck in orange sauce, served pink and abundantly flavoured.

A suitable interlude, and the puddings are towed in and drooled over. There is an excellent variety, and you are encouraged to sample as many as you can manage.

Our strategy was to each order a small portion of two contrasting puddings, and to try each other's, thereby tasting eight in two days. Lemon and ginger crunch, was satisfyingly heavy and creamy and went well with the lighter hazelnut and apricot roulade. The Austrian cheese cake tasted almost savoury after the concentrated, dark richness of the chocolate truffle tourte. Strawberry mille feuilles was a crisp, flaky contrast with the smooth, fluffy and tangy passion-fruit mousse. A grander establishment might have

installed a swimming pool in order to allow patrons to work off the excess. But then that would be to forget that Plumber Manor is more a restaurant with bedrooms than a full-blown country house hotel. The result is friendlier and more intimate: a place where conviviality triumphs over corporate correctness.

Plumber Manor, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 2AF (01258 472507) Prices are from £45 per person for bed and breakfast

LYGON ARMS, Worcestershire

A half-way house to happiness

By Andrew Thorman



It's your 20th wedding anniversary, so what do you do? Book into the most expensive hotel you can find. Well, that's what I did, and hang the expense. The fact that it has become a slow lingering death by bank statement is another matter.

We drove to the Lygon Arms at Broadway in the Cotswolds. You may have read about it, "Gladiator's star has guests giggling". I think that was the gist of the post-mortem following Ulrika Johnson's sojourn with her hunk.

Anyway, I was thinking it could be a bit of a laugh, for the bank manager if no one else.

We drove into the small-town America that is Broadway - the place is full of people saying "Gee how sweet" - and swept through the archway into the hotel car park. And straight out again.

Blimey, I thought. A Roller (N-reg), Porsche, Mercedes convertible (naturally) and, squeezed between the geraniums and begonias, a Morgan with an Italian number plate. Somehow my G-registered Isuzu (mud-splattered) Trooper, seemed out of place. To the public car park, and be quick about it.

We carried our bags - best shirt and tie and frock - towards reception. The time was 2.43pm. I remember it well because the hotel had told me that the official check-in time was 2pm but that we could arrive whenever we wanted.

The room wasn't ready. Ten minutes. We were served fresh coffee (in a cafetière with china cups) in the drawing room. With home-made biscuits.

Gratis. Free. For nothing. Our room was at the back of the hotel in a ghastly Sixties-looking extension which HRH Prince Charles would have described as a carbuncle on the face of a dirty weekend. Still, it was impressive.

I had originally asked if the Lygon Arms did bargain breaks. Joke. But they do, in fact, do bargain breaks. Only they call them Champagne Breaks. I explained that because of the children we couldn't make a whole "Break" but how about a night? They were most accommodating. We could have a "half" champagne break. Which meant we got one night with a four-poster and... half a bottle of champagne.


Still, it was bloody good champagne. With the Lygon Arms own label. And just as we had drained the bottle came a knock at the door. There stood a slightly out of breath member of staff bearing a decanter of sherry. This, I thought, was the life.

It got better. There was a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, steam room, sauna. In the Jacuzzi we met other "champagne breakers", the 75cl versions. An airline pilot and stewardess and an American honeymoon couple. We all agreed that money can buy happiness. Even if the cost is living on baked beans for the next six months.

Don't tell my family, but the night's champagne break in a four poster with a three-course dinner and continental breakfast plus bottle of Cloudy Bay cost somewhere in the region of £270.

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SIMON CALDER

The August bank holiday punctuates the travel calendar, marking the cusp where attention switches from holidays at home and in Europe to warmer, more exotic destinations. While you mull over where, when and how to explore the planet, you should also consider your effect on the world.

Two publications arrived with the post on Monday morning, each telling a story about tourism's impact. The latest edition of *In Focus*, published by the London-based pressure group Tourism Concern, reports from Cappadocia in central Turkey. The owner of a pansiyon (cheap guest house) in the town of Goreme faced jail for painting over a medieval fresco. His defence was that "tourists like clean white walls".

Meanwhile, Tailor Made Travel of Evesham has adopted a neat method of minimising the waste involved in holiday brochures. The back cover of its new brochure gives a Freepost address for people to return the glossy publication so that it can be sent out to other prospective travellers. Fewer brochures need to be produced and subsequently disposed of.

Britain's biggest tour operator, Thomson, produces Britain's biggest

holiday brochure: its Summer Sun '97 weighs 36 glossy ounces. But the company says it has no plans to introduce a recycling scheme. So: full marks to Tailor Made Travel - except that the company sent me two copies of the brochure, in separate envelopes to the same address. I have returned one, postage paid.

We tourists would be better equipped if there were more people like Wilfrid George around. I spent last Saturday in the company of Mr George's excellent Footpath Map of Dedham Vale, a self-published snip at £1. Besides guiding you from Mitley to Dedham through the Essex-Suffolk border country, it is full of simple but effective contributions that the visitor can make.

"Fallen signposts: the walker who carries wire, string and pliers and re-erects these will earn the gratitude of those who follow." Or, involving rather less hardware, "Brambles would be less of a problem if more walkers carried a pair of secateurs". Mr George cheerfully accepts that his map is not quite cartographic perfection with the compass point: an arrow indicating "approximate north".

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travel new zealand

Where the Maori looked for jade

Jon Lusk finds parrots, carnivorous plants and plastic windmills on a walk along New Zealand's Heaphy Track



Walk talk: rambling through the varied vegetation in the Kahurangi National Park. Photograph: Jon Lusk

Indestructible but unwearable! My sister holds out a white high-heeled shoe with this inscription as my friend Declan steadies himself against a bizarre totem pole adorned with offerings from passing trampers. We are halfway through the second day of our tramp along New Zealand's 77-kilometre Heaphy Track. It is difficult to imagine the stilettoes in active service on this terrain.

The Heaphy Track is a five-day walk through remote bush country in Kahurangi National Park on the West Coast of The South Island. It is originally used by Maori in search of pounamu – greenstone or jade.

We are greeted by clouds of sandflies at Brown Hut, where our driver from Nelson drops us. We don fashion-free plastic gaiters and smother ourselves in insect repellent to give at least half an hour's protection from the hungry and persistent invertebrates – like midges on steroids.

A long, three-hour uphill walk takes us to Aore Shelter, the first place you can pitch a tent. No gas stoves or bunks, just a small clearing and a doortless shelter. We set up camp in fading light and gently falling rain.

I'm woken next morning by the raucous cries of kaka, a large brown forest parrot. It's an unmis-

takeable rusty-nail-on-a-tin-can sound, and gratifying proof that we are far from city streets.

We drag ourselves away from the tent flies and restore feelings of humanity with a morning brew before setting off. Soon we reach Flanagan's Corner, the highest point on the track at 915 metres. The vegetation has become steadily more sub-alpine, with spiky dracophyllum grass-trees looming out of the mist, and spectacular alpine cabbage-trees invading the stunted beech forest. The spacious Perry Saddle Hut is set in a magical, alpine garden of tussock grassland studded with various hebe species. Tiny carnivorous sundews thrive in the wetter parts. Some amateur botanising is in order, but first a mug of hot tomato soup and cabin bread smeared with peanut butter, which tastes sensational after all that exertion. Our shoulders are killing us.

It's literally all downhill from here; not so easy on the knees. The Goulard Downs are the most level section of the track, presenting a very different landscape from the previous day. For the most part, it's open grassland, though occasionally we pass through mossy copses of beech. At Goulard Downs Hut, two hours from Perry, we are met with curious stares from the local weka. The cheeky hen-like birds are entirely flightless

and combine a canny distrust of humans with surprising fearlessness.

Only five more kilometres to Saxon Hut, on the other side of the downs, so we press on through easy, if sometimes boggy, terrain.

The following day is the wettest and most miserable. The landscape is stunning, but most of the time our eyes are fixed firmly on the muddy track. We pass into beech forest, which steadily becomes more of a lowland rainforest. Large, graceful rimu trees and lush tree ferns increase in number as we wind down towards the junction of Goulard Creek and the Lewis River and arrive at Lewis Hut.

A crowd of high-spirited fellow trampers has hung an assortment of steaming socks and T-shirts over the stove, well actually obliterating most cooking smells. We are most at sea level and only eight kilometres from the coast and the sandflies, which weren't so troublesome at higher altitudes, have returned with a vengeance.

The next day dawn is glorious. We have an easy three-hour stroll down to the coast, crossing the swing bridges that span the limestone canyons of the tea-coloured Heaphy River. The billowing crimson forest of flowering southern rata and the world's most southerly growing palm, the nikau, give the vegetation a supernatural

beauty. You could imagine dinosaurs still existing here. But all we can hear are the liquid chimes of bellbirds and a gently sighing breeze above the canopy.

Finally we reach the sea and Heaphy Hut which is in a delightful grassy clearing, kept short by two resident horses. They have also learnt how to turn on the outdoor tap and open the louvre windows in the kitchen with their teeth. They sometimes even ferry out injured trampers.

Our last day's walk takes us 16 km along the coast to Kohaihai shelter through a magnificent windswept coastal forest and often on to the beach itself. It's the most beautiful part of the park, and explains why Heaphy hut is often crowded.

At one point we pass a cluster of tiny plastic windmills, a tragic fluttering memorial to a group of trampers who went swimming in the wild grey-green Tasman Sea and never came back. A nearby fur seal seems unimpressed, belching its fishy breath at us and lumbering off into the surf.

When we're crossing our last bridge and before we know it there are campervans, barking dogs, rubbish bins and a telephone. Plus transport. Suddenly thoughts of TV, Jacuzzi, soft clean sheets and hotel meals make The Last Resort hotel in Karamaea seem like our first priority.

New Zealand Survival Guide

Getting there
New Zealand is almost diametrically opposite Britain, so you can cheerfully set off in whichever direction you like in the knowledge that you will get there eventually. How much you pay depends more on the time of year than on the route you choose. If you can, take advantage of the fares war that is in progress for the period from November to April – summer in New Zealand. Be warned that fares rise sharply for the Christmas period. But at other times, you can expect to pay around £800 through discount agents for a return to Auckland or Christchurch from London or Manchester.

Getting in
Visas are not required by British passport holders for short visits, though your passport must have at least six months to run.

Getting around
Air: the two main airlines are Air New Zealand and Ansett NZ. Foreign visitors can buy airpasses, but these must be purchased in advance. Indeed, it is a good idea to buy all air tickets in advance because this enables you to avoid General Sales Tax of 12.5 per cent. Rail and bus: the leading operator of both trains and buses is InterCity, a nationalised concern. The company's Travelpass allows unlimited travel on trains, buses and the inter-island ferries, costing around £150 for any eight days of travel in a fortnight. Car rental: you can hire cars easily and cheaply. For example, Budget (0800 181181) charges £250 for a week's hire of a small hatchback in October, if you book in advance. Be warned, however, that driving standards are poor and the accident rate is high.

Hitch-hiking: New Zealand is one of the easiest countries in the world for hitch-hiking, though the practice is rendered risky by the road accident statistics.

Accommodation
New Zealand specialist operators can supply hotel passes, providing flat-rate accommodation at properties around the country. With the Flag Hotel pass, for example, you buy as many vouchers as you need at around £40 each, and can obtain refunds on any that remain unused. The YHA Travel Pass is valid at the country's extensive network of hostels, and has the advantage that the first hostel will arrange to pick you up from the airport on arrival. And even if you have no intention of staying in a youth hostel, a membership card can qualify you for a range of discounts.

Further information
The New Zealand Tourism Board is based at 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ (0839 300900, a premium-rated number).



Thumbing a lift into a fabulous landscape

Hitch-hiking around the Pacific Rim in 1986, Hamish Mykura entered the world of a Booker-prize novel

Hitch-hiking in New Zealand is an easy sport, and hitch hiking in a kilt there is really no sport at all. Like going fishing with dynamite in an aquarium, it's simply too easy.

I spent the summer of 1986 hitch-hiking around the Pacific Rim, on the thin pretext of researching a graduate thesis on soil erosion. In South East Asia, my kilt was itchy and sweaty and regarded by drivers as some unfashionable variety of mini-sarong, and no one paid much attention to it at all. In California the man in the skirt by the roadside was assumed to be just another run-of-the-mill sex perv. I'd reached the point where I was just about ready to sell the thing, and then I reached New Zealand.

Then I found what I'd been searching for – understanding, recognition, and really long lifts. I sped around the North Island in record time, and began the long southward haul down the eerie, alpine coast of the South Island.

At the end of the previous year, Keri Hulme's magic-realist Maori fable *The Bone People* had enraged the literary establishment by stealing the Booker Prize, and as the roads got narrower and the cars less frequent I had time to stand on the verge, book in one hand and thumb at the ready on the other, and read her strange evocations of the landscape around me.

Then I got stranded in the middle of nowhere: a long long wait on flat, bleak farmland at the top of a windy hill down to the sea. The light was slowly being sucked out of the bedraggled scrubby sky, and there was a sudden spatter of big warm raindrops. I kept thinking of the peculiar bits in the book when Maori ancestors, powerful and malign, emerge alarmingly into reality.

A car rounded the corner, headlights spotlighting the raindrops, and me. It passed, braked sharply, and came whining back. The door opened. "Not many kiltos on the Franz Josef road" said a woman's voice.

I got in, book on my lap, and we raced off. She had a big face, strong smile, something about the cheeks were slightly Maori.

She nodded at the book *"The Bone People?"* "Yes," I said. "Have you read it?"

"Actually," she said, "I wrote it".

We looked at each other. *The Bone People* was fiction, but the person at the wheel was the sullen, brilliant heroine of the story.

We bounced along in the Hillman Avenger down a gravel road towards Okarito, population 21. Her town, tiny and inaccessible. "It's off the beaten track: so not so many Germans." That sounded good.

Between the wet gulls the moon would break through and show up a bare, slick landscape, punch-drunk from recent glaciation. I chattered about glaciers, pointing out moraines, U-shaped valleys, roches moutonnées. She seemed intrigued. "How do you know about all this?"

Sheepish: "I'm a geomorphologist." Usually a conversation stopper. Clears parties in moments.

Wildly enthusiastic: "Bloody Hell! I always wanted to be a geomorphologist!" There was, I suppose, a kind of bonding.

She asked me to come round that evening and I brought my plastic bottle of Johnny Walker, dead weight saved for a special occasion.

Her house was strange: hand-built and round, like a

stubby lighthouse. I knew as I got near it that I was walking into the pages of the book. The beautiful octagonal tower room that is the centre of so much of the story's action was already completely familiar, and there it was, exactly as imagined, real to the last detail.

We drank and talked about glaciers and Maoris

and the shape of New Zealand and the pages of the evening turned. The whisky was drunk and the conversation turned to racoons. Bloody pests in these parts, said Keri Hulme. Then we lifted down rifles from the medieval hooks on one wall of the room and stepped out into the night to shoot racoons.

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travel

Toothbrush, phrasebook, what have I forgotten?

Simon Calder guides you through that last-minute passport panic

You are due to travel to Greece or Spain, and you have just discovered that your passport has expired, been chewed by the dog, or is not in the drawer where you thought you'd left it. In any of the past 20 summers, you would simply have taken a couple of photos and some vague evidence of identity to the nearest post office and bought a British Visitor's Passport, the instant travel document that allowed travel to most parts of Europe.

As part of a crackdown on illegal migration, this fall-back facility has been withdrawn – the visitor's passport expired on New Year's Eve. Unless – and until – Michael Howard's plans for a national identity card come to photographic fruition, only a full 10-year passport will do. But don't panic until you have read this emergency guide.

I am booked to travel today. Can I just turn up at the airport and hope to bluff my way through? Almost certainly not. Airlines are extremely assiduous about checking passports, for two reasons. The first is for security: the name on the flight ticket must match the name on the passport, which is tricky if you have no passport. The second reason is because the airline wants to make sure you will be admitted to the destination country. Increasingly many countries impose fines on airlines that bring in people who are refused entry by immigration; in Britain the fine is £2,000.

Had you checked last weekend, you could have applied for the Artac emergency passport service. Artac is a consortium of travel agents (call 0500 757737 for the branch nearest you) that is authorised to process passport applications. Artac reckons it can get you a passport in two working days, if you pay the courier charges.

But we're always being told to apply weeks in advance for a new passport. How can I get one in a matter of days? By turning up in person at the Passport Office at Clive House, 70-78 Petty France, London SW1 (close to St James's Park underground station) on Monday morning. The office opens at 9am, though you would be advised to get there by 8am if you want to be at the front of the queue and be seen immediately. Make sure you have all the relevant documentation ready: an application form (which you can get today, from any post office), endorsed by a pillar of the community such as a doctor; two photographs, similarly endorsed; your old passport if you have it, or the number of the previous one if it has been lost or stolen; and evidence of the immediacy of your need, such as flight tickets. In my (rather too frequent) experience, if everything is in order you will be told to return a few hours later to pick up the new document. The same procedure applies at any of the regional passport offices, at Belfast, Glasgow, Liverpool, Newport and Peterborough.

So I've got the new passport, but I'm heading to Goa next day – and my Indian visa was in the old one. Is there anything I can do to get a new visa instantly?

Just try your luck and hope that the official is helpful. The Indian High Commission has been known to oblige with instant replacement visas in the past. If you were going to Australia, then you can get a visitor's visa on the spot at Australia House, just around the corner from the Indian Commission. But if you were planning to work in your destination country, the procedure is likely to be extremely long-winded.

I've heard that Barcelona is the place *par excellence* to get your passport stolen. What should I do if mine goes missing while I am there this weekend?

In theory, you have to wait until the British consulate re-opens on Monday, and apply for a new passport there. In practice, you may be able to persuade your airline to bring you home without any documentation, if you can provide the police report of the theft – and evidence of your right of abode in the UK.

But I'm planning to travel from Spain to France, Germany and the Benelux countries. I no longer need a passport to travel through these countries, do I?

Yes, you do. Under the Schengen Accord (named after a small village at the corner of Luxembourg, France and Germany), frontier controls between these countries have been abolished. But the right to travel freely is accompanied by a duty to provide identification upon request. And for British citizens, for whom there is no identity-card system, the only suitable document is a valid passport.

So what is *The Independent's* solution to avoid passport calamities?

When you book your trip, make sure your passport will be valid – and with a bit of "headroom" to spare, for countries that require passports to have a certain amount of life (three or six months) left in them.

Better still, get a second passport. Every regular traveller should have a pair. The UK Passport Agency will routinely issue a second one on payment of the usual £18 fee. This will endow you with a great amount of freedom: to travel abroad while your passport is being processed by some of the slower visa-issuing authorities (such as China and Vietnam); to travel to Arab countries on one passport and to Israel on the other; to travel despite suffering the theft of a passport. The truly sophisticated traveller will have his or her second passport issued by a different country, if there is a sufficiently strong connection by birth or residence to acquire one.



Bank holiday jumbo crossword by Aelred

Cryptic

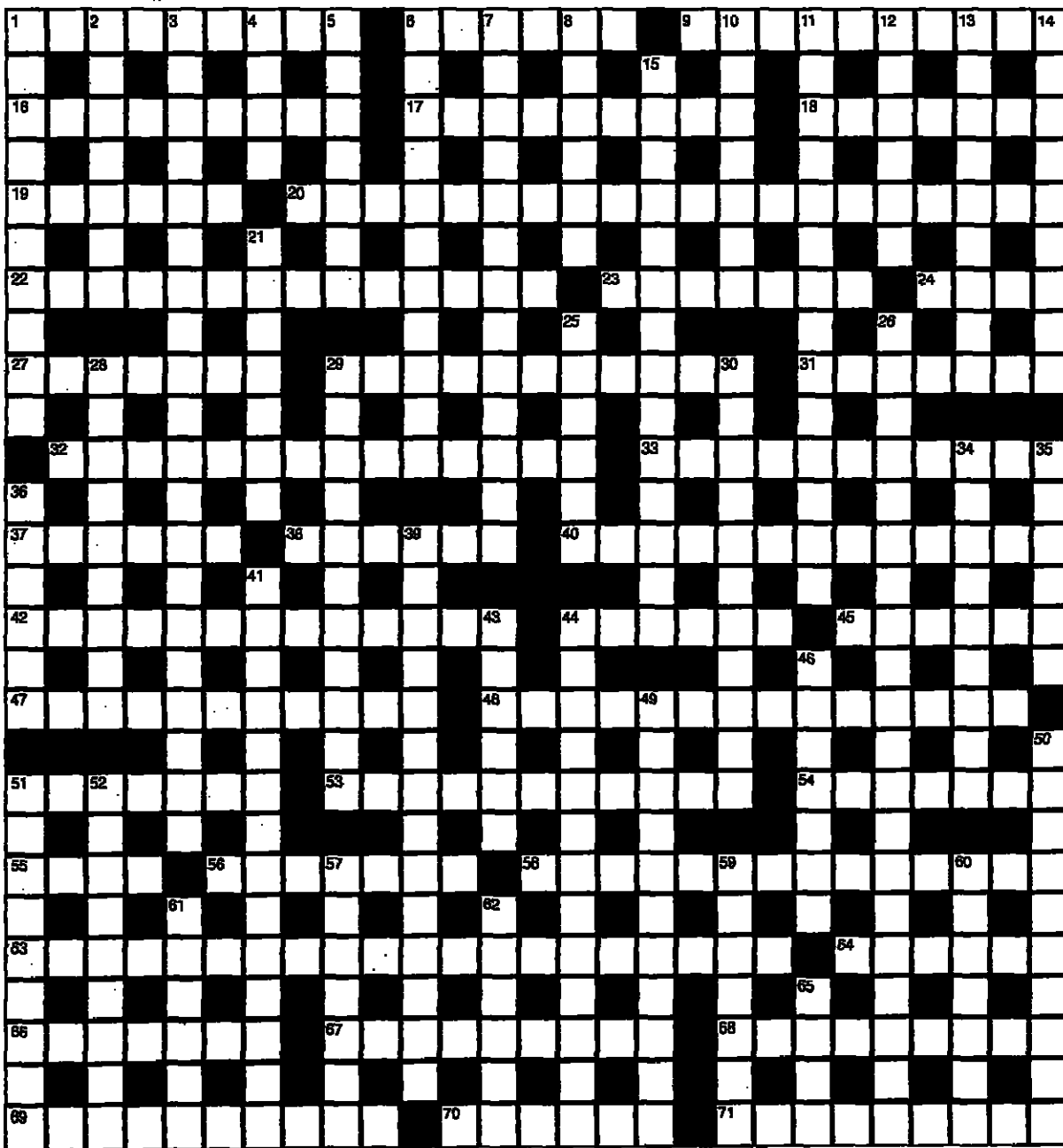
Across

- 1 Badly fails one held by US agent shown to be wrong (9)
- 6 Time surrounded by reduced fare's apt for this person (6)
- 9 A fellow providing money namelessly for getting bonds? (10)
- 16 Stress's limiting instinctive feeling for mishaps (9)
- 17 Nice organ playing could be bliss? (9)
- 18 Hurry to suppress revolutionary educator (7)
- 19 Philosophical system of Chinese revolutionary with a reversal of ends (6)
- 20 Male meets European and Frenchman about church full of a kind of carbon (20)
- 22 Fruit machine: backed protest about tight players on it (3-5,6)
- 23 Laboured, indicating dredging's required, taking time (7)
- 24 Leave out order on Information Technology (4)
- 27 A piano produces musical sounds and is attractive (7)
- 29 After vote is cast I celebrate forming councils (11)
- 31 Given coaching over pictures to dine out on (7)
- 32 Perhaps Hazel isn't serious arranging quality of food (14)
- 33 Rough and sex-discriminating treatment? (11)
- 37 At the finish I have a salad plant (6)
- 38 Lots of piles of hay (6)
- 40 Study by doctor has nothing reasonable about tree science (13)
- 42 Figure could be all pearl with nothing spread over (13)
- 44 Valuable things presented in groups (6)
- 45 Pieta damaged by one in capital city (6)
- 47 They annoy Irish woman at Nice going off south (11)
- 48 Females who specialise in making children cross? (8,6)
- 51 British tree retreat needs waterproof jacket (7)
- 53 Earth scientists secure money for jewellers (11)
- 54 Bright orange or unusual tax applied twice with a bit of orange (7)
- 55 Crowds of 1000 old boys (4)
- 56 Speak about where you live (7)
- 58 Flag in early US election? (7,7)
- 63 Police Constable reduced to right thinking (9,11)
- 64 Seeing sixth sense shown one by a learner (6)
- 66 Payment remitted by French friend for Japanese art (7)
- 67 US car hidden in the clover (9)
- 68 Range once fooled MP, an idiot (9)
- 69 Fine is sent out; it is limited (10)
- 70 Remained awfully steady (6)
- 71 Tenor travelled without judge and took part in old contest (9)

Down

- 1 Taking sides about right to be lacking integrity (10)
- 2 Don't succeed when about to do something which is sugary (7)
- 3 It started the wheels of business (10, 10)
- 4 They will accommodate popular bridge partners (4)
- 5 I'd burst out to do this (7)
- 6 Offensive weapons making Kevin upset in cinema (5-6)
- 7 Seventies' sins could be showing prickly quality (13)
- 8 Serge's novel way out (6)
- 10 Well-endowed guitar might be making one peevish (7)
- 11 At home archer meets awfully cute friend using brains (14)
- 12 Approached listener to open study up (6)
- 13 Much in one changes for an animal (9)
- 14 Chap with editor keeps part of body clothed (9)
- 15 Supply tanner, it's meant to give lots of fun (14)
- 21 Act as model in county homes (7)
- 25 Shies away before daughter's cat-called (6)
- 26 12 sun seekers? (3,4,3,10)
- 28 Pillager in Poland's subject to Queen (9)
- 29 Fault which might imply long leave-taking? (11)
- 30 People of their time set limit in elements of heredity (11)
- 34 Beginning in Channel Islands measure encompasses European (9)
- 35 Source of bitterness when getting in charge of French (6)
- 36 I'd help in ambiguous uttering? (6)
- 39 They suggest Noel's very

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Concise

Across

- 1 Marine drive (9)
- 6 Thigh-bones (6)
- 9 Singers of slow sentimental songs (10)
- 16 Pain reliever (9)
- 17 Not forming iron oxides (9)
- 18 Indian ruffian (7)
- 19 Stroke tenderly (6)
- 20 Roll and coffee? (11,9)
- 22 Gems (8,6)
- 23 Governor (7)
- 24 Advantage (4)
- 27 — Hall, infamous for corruption (7)
- 29 Order of monks (11)
- 31 Guilty person (7)
- 32 They're taken in readiness for battle (6,8)
- 33 Ingenious state (11)
- 37 Finnish currency (6)
- 38 Fallen away (6)
- 40 Crude state (13)
- 42 Fixed (13)
- 44 Rank in smell or taste (6)
- (6)
- 45 Virulent disease (6)
- 47 Lack of harmony (11)
- 48 Wireless communicator (5,9)
- 51 Had banquet (7)
- 53 In wise way (11)
- 54 Style of 20s and 30s (3,4)
- 55 Nottingham material? (4)
- 56 Germ (7)
- 58 As part of job (14)
- 63 What court may not consider (12,8)
- 64 With employment potential (6)
- 66 Sinful (7)
- 67 Concentrated (9)
- 68 Violent criminal (9)
- 69 Irrelevant matter, especially in law (10)
- 70 — thee, witch! (alternative spelling) (6)
- 71 Tells (9)

Down

- 1 Free (10)
- 2 Treeless plain (7)
- 3 Edna O'Brien novel (6,2,1,6,5)
- 4 In addition (4)
- 5 Deeds held by third parties (7)
- 6 Anticipation (11)
- 7 Wrongly grasped (13)
- 8 Plundering (6)
- 10 Pleasant (7)
- 11 Authorisation for cash (6,2,6)
- 12 Toppers (6)
- 13 Facetious type of Briton (9)
- 14 Perspiring most (9)
- 15 A making explosive (use s not z spelling) (14)
- 21 With tendency to float (7)
- 25 Starts to pay attention (4,2)
- 26 Phrase emphasising importance of outcome (4,4,4,4,4)
- 28 Old dandies (9)
- 29 Things with pull (11)
- 30 In nourishing way (11)
- 34 A coming out (9)
- 35 Group of 6 (6)
- 36 Fated (6)
- 39 Capacity to be sunk (14)
- 41 Electronic weapons (6,8)
- 43 Give added wealth (6)
- 44 A product of nuclear weapons (13)
- 46 Trappings of power (7)
- 49 Rare word for eclipse (11)
- 50 South African plants (10)
- 51 Makes untrue (9)
- 52 One approving enthusiastically (9)
- 57 Attacking (7)
- 59 Gave way (7)
- 60 Lip sounds (7)
- 61 Of shadow (6)
- 62 More sharp (6)
- 65 Manipulates (4)

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property

Please do not disturb

Earlier this month Peter Aikens was given £431,000 to move house. Rosalind Russell explains why

Peter Aikens' ears must be burning. The 57-year-old £341,000-a-year cider-firm boss given £431,000 to move house, has had the details of his relocation package bandied around in the newspapers to the general tongue-licking disapproval of everyone... except the board of Matthew Clark, which makes Dry Blackthorn and Taunton cider.

Keen to hang on to their dynamic chief executive when the company moved its HQ from Guildford to Bristol, the board decided to pay Mr Aiken £127,000 "disturbance allowance", £68,000 compensation because his house in Reigate failed to sell for as much as expected, and a further £169,000 for tax so that he would not be out of pocket. (The Inland Revenue ceiling for removal expenses is £8,000, above which tax is payable.) The rest of the payout, presumably, went in legal and removal fees and the kind of things you need £67,000 for.

The Aikens, who have two sons, sold their Surrey home for just over £300,000 and chose a £400,000 seven-bedroom home in Shepton Mallett. The new house is believed to have terraced gardens and spectacular views - as you'd expect for that much money.

The relocation package is understood to be the biggest handout of its kind. It has certainly provoked wry amusement among relocation agents who say the usual disturbance allowance is one month's salary, which in Peter Aikens' case would be around £28,000. £127,000 seems hard to justify. "What were they leaving behind? Gold-plated carpets?" cries Tad Zurlinden, chief of the Association of Relocation Agents. "A payment of £68,000 compensation for the house, that's reasonable, most people would agree. But £127,000 is an outrageous sum of money. Even if you bought a new cooker, dishwasher and washing machine, you'd have to go out of your way to spend that much."

The general opinion of the relocation experts is that this decision was a one-off, taken "in-house". Companies that move staff regularly have a policy laying down exactly what is paid to whom. Smith Kline-Beecham for instance, offers

15 per cent of salary. This would be expected to cover goods that had to be replaced (left behind as fixtures and fittings), new school uniforms, redecoration, redirection of mail, kennelling fees, and hotels while house hunting.

Kennels cost around £9 a day, so a brace of golden retrievers banded up for a fortnight until the boxes are unpacked would run up a bill of £252. A new school uniform can cost a couple of hundred depending on the kit required. It is not known if the Aikens sons are still in grey flannel shorts.

"A package this size is not unheard of," says Stuart Mitchell, who runs a consortium of relocation agents. "But it is unusual. A disturbance allowance is intended to cover run-of-the-mill items. If, however, someone buys a property that is not comparable to the old one, the Inland Revenue might want to know about it."

The problem faced by the Aikens is that although there are plenty of houses for sale in Surrey, there's not much in the way of class items to buy around Shepton Mallett. Humberts has recently sold three houses at around £300,000 each in the area, including one with two acres and six bedrooms - but it went in a fortnight. "Competition is fierce when such properties do come on the market," says Humberts' Mike Sperring. "There just isn't much to choose from. Millfield School also keeps prices buoyant, as parents move to be near the school so that the child can be a day pupil."

So what could Peter Aikens have bought for the price of

his Reigate home? Not a great deal, it must be admitted.

There's Home Farm House, a charming old Georgian detached three-storey farmhouse near Shepton Mallett, on the market with Cluttons. Surrounded by attractive rolling countryside, it has five bedrooms, drawing and dining rooms, library, stone barn, and a delightful garden. The guide price is £315,000. And there's Bagborough House, just over three miles from Shepton Mallett, for sale through Michael de Pelet. The Grade II-listed house with stone mullion windows has three reception rooms, five bedrooms, walled garden and paddock. It's in need of decoration and repair, but costs only £275,000.

Redecorating - as any high ranking army officer's wife will tell you - can cost more than you might expect. And once you've decorated, you can't possibly keep the old sofa with the Ribena stains and the rip where the cat got at it. Jane Churchill Interior Designers in London has a great deal of experience in kitting out large, stylish homes. Designers there say a recent job cost the owners of a substantial Holland Park house £40,000 for carpets and flooring, and a further £65,000 for curtains and upholstery. Add to this the painting and decorating - a smartish wallpaper costs around £25 a roll. B&Q furnishings just won't do when you've paid £400,000 for the house.

To paper the new Aikens establishment with a nice bit of Colefax & Fowler could cost around £8,000. And that's

before anyone does anything clever with sponges and paint effects. Even replacing a Seventies avocado bathroom suite could relieve you of £6,000.

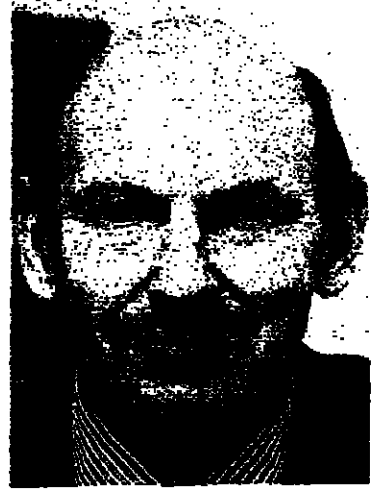
"It's quite easy to spend £1,000 on a pair of curtains, including fabric and labour and you may, of course, have more than one window in each room," says a Jane Churchill designer. "We charge a design fee to cover the time spent on putting the estimate together and site visits. If we travel out of London, visits are charged at a daily or hourly rate."

As for the kitchen - it's becoming increasingly common for buyers to insist on all white goods being included in the price of a property. If the Aikens had to leave their behind in Surrey, fitting out the kitchen in the new house could be very expensive. Buying the best of everything with knobs on from Harrods - dishwasher, washer/dryer, fridge/freezer and cooker - the bill could add up to £19,998. Or they could have bought the lot from Zanussi's top-of-the-range and paid just £3,479.

These are the sort of figures that bring most men out in a rash. Especially those who make an annual pilgrimage to Waitrose and make a fuss about how much Nescafé has gone up since 1979. Either way, it's beginning to look as though Matthew Clark got off lightly with a £127,000 disturbance fee. They are probably raising a glass or two in the boardroom even now. Cheers!



Below, Peter Aikens, whose company paid him nearly half a million pounds to move to Bristol. Left, the Aikens' new house. To replace those curtains would obviously be expensive. Photographs: South West News



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سكزا من الراجل

From Poseidon onwards, there have been mug investors who, like the Duke of York, rode their favourite shares to the top of a bull market – and all the way back down again

There is one thing that the investment world is never short of, and that is share tips. Most inexperienced investors think that finding the right things to buy is the sole object of the exercise. It is natural enough. For that is where the excitement in investing on the stock market lies. Of course, for those who want to speculate on shares that they hope will fall in future, it is possible to do so with traded options, but even then you have to buy something – a "put" option – to get into the game in the first place.

Far less attention is given to the question of when to sell shares. Yet this can be just as important as finding when to buy them. Everyone who still owns Hanson or BTR shares, for example, must have bought them at some stage with high hopes of what they might do. But after several years of sparkling performance, they are both now languishing unloved, their share prices having gone sideways for years.

True, both companies still pay a handsome dividend, with yields after inflation that comfortably beat the obvious alternatives and provide useful compensation for the lack of recent capital appreciation. Hanson's demerger may yet provide the boost to the share price that was intended when Lord Hanson decided to dismantle the



JONATHAN DAVIS INVESTMENTS

empire that he and Gordon White had so successfully constructed over 25 years.

Stock market history is full of those who declined to sell at the right moment, and lost all – or nearly all – of the money they thought they were going to make from a share which soared, only to crash to earth later. From Poseidon onwards, there have been plenty of mug investors who, like the Duke of York, rode their favourite shares right to the top of a bull market – and then all the way down again, sometimes ending up with nothing at all.

So, for those looking for above-average returns over time, knowing when to sell can be just as crucial as knowing what and when to buy. One method that is popular is a so-called "stop loss" system. This lays down that if your chosen share falls by a certain percentage below your purchase price, you should sell it regardless. That way you will ensure that you at least cut your losses on an investment that does not turn out well.

The technique is one that is borrowed from the gambling world, and is widely adopted in the trading fraternity. It is not inappropriate for those who regard investing in shares as something akin to gambling, or who take a lot of positions in the hope of short-term gains, as traders do. This method is essentially a discipline to stop you making a fool of yourself by dabbling in something where the risks are too high to be quantifiable.

Yet for those who regard investment in shares as a long-term process of wealth accumulation, and who believe that risks can be successfully managed by careful stock selection, the stop loss technique leaves a good deal to be desired. For the fact that a share has gone down does not in itself mean that the decision to buy was a mistake.

It does mean, obviously, that with hindsight your timing could have been better, but perfect timing in the stock market is impossible to achieve. All that such an experience really shows is that, for the moment, there are others in the market who have missed the reason to buy that you have seen. Sentiment is against you.

Far from being a reason to sell, that may well reinforce the decision to buy. In the words of the investment writer John Train, "to sell a stock you understand just because it has gone down is an act of utter irrationality. If you are going to sell every time the stock goes down, you will never win, any more than a general who always retreats when the enemy advances".

The key assumption in this kind of analysis is that you do understand the share you have bought and that nothing has happened to change the reasons why you bought it. As obtaining outperformance with shares is impossible without some degree of contrarianism, it is only logical that now and then shares you buy will actually fall before they start to appreciate again.

The more important question for long-term investors is whether a company's underlying business retains its economic advantages. If it does, and you bought the shares for reasons that still appear sound, then the last thing you should worry about is the short-

term movements in the share price. Falls in the share price may well become an excuse for buying more, not selling.

Philip Fisher, one of the best and most original thinkers in the investment business, took this principle to its logical conclusion when he propounded the aphorism that "the best time to sell a share is – almost never". His own habit as a professional investment adviser has been to buy and hold favourite shares, such as Motorola and Intel, for literally decades at a time regardless of the overall state of the market.

His argument is that it makes no sense to sell shares you really like simply because you are worried that the market as a whole is going to decline. The rationale, set out in one of his masterly essays on the stock market, is that the overall direction of the market is impossible to call accurately. Quality, he argued, will always out in the end.

So where does that leave today's investors? Stick to those few companies you do understand and allow the market to take care of itself. Only if you have made a mistake in your original thinking does it make sense to sell just because the market falls. Of course, if you make a whole series of mistakes, then perhaps you are not quite as smart as you thought and it is time to put that stop loss system in place after all.

Who's going to pay for my pension if I'm too ill to work?

A simple insurance policy can cover this risk, but many people who take out personal pensions are not told about it. Isabel Berwick reports

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Thousands of personal pensions are being sold without a firm recommendation that policyholders also buy insurance that will guarantee a comfortable retirement even if they are unable through illness or injury to complete the payments into the policy.

Most of us aren't even aware of these "waiver of contribution" policies. If you already have a personal pension, check the small print. You may or may not have signed up for a waiver without realising it: pension providers usually ask you to tick a box on the pension application form if you want this insurance.

It could be crucially important. Pensions legislation states that you can't carry on paying into a personal pension fund when you aren't working. That includes long-term sickness. A waiver contract will continue to pay all your pension contributions if you fall ill. You should then be guaranteed a pension at your normal retirement date, even if you never work again.

It doesn't cost much – generally about 3 per cent of your monthly contributions. The policy is underwritten in the same way as medical insurance. As women take more long-term sick leave on average during their careers, however, they are often asked to pay a higher contribution than men.

Despite its importance, many pension providers don't ask financial advisers to highlight the significance of a waiver plan when they sell a personal pension. Legal & General says only about one in four of its personal pension customers has taken up the waiver option. At Sun Alliance the figure is one in three.

Peter Timberlake at Legal & General blames the low take-up rate on the public's generally lax attitude to pension planning. "It may be one of those cases where people say 'it won't happen to me'. It is difficult enough to get people to put adequate amounts into a pension as it is and this may seem to be an unnecessary extra expense."

But a growing number of financial advisers believe that the current situation is a pensions disaster waiting to happen. Paul Grant is a London-based independent financial adviser who lobbies pension firms to include waiver contracts on every personal pension they sell. He points out that once people on long-term sick leave realise they have missed out on a crucial protection scheme, they may have a strong case for compensation.

Mr Grant quotes one case where a dentist had not been recommended to take out a waiver contract alongside his personal pension plan. He became too ill to work and successfully sued the independent financial adviser who sold him the policy. He won £97,000. But it is never wise to rely on a ruling in your favour. Better check your policy now.



Off to work. But what if you become seriously ill and cannot pay pension contributions? Photograph: Geraint Lewis

Some pension companies, however, make it almost impossible to claim even if you do become seriously ill. They do it by giving a very strict definition of what they consider to be a disability that prevents you from working. So any contract that states that the insurance will cover you if you are unable to perform "any occupation" should be avoided. It means that someone working in a desk-bound professional job who then falls ill can only expect their pension provider to consider them disabled if they really can't do any work at all, including non-skilled tasks.

Among the firms which persist with these unfair terms are Equitable Life, Professional Life and Scottish Amicable – three of the five top-performing firms for personal pensions, according to Money Management.

If you are looking for a new pension plan, it makes sense to select a provider that offers to pay your premiums if you are unable to return to your own job.

The situation is improving – pension providers with poor contracts are responding to industry pressure to improve their terms. Scottish Life recently announced a switch from "any occu-

pation" to "own occupation" definitions of disability.

It's also worth checking how your pension contributions will be calculated if you have to claim on the insurance. If you have been paying a fixed amount into your pension and then have to make a claim on the insurance you are likely to find that the money going into your fund will always be fixed at that level. If you are faced with 20 years or more off work, the pension isn't going to be worth much when you reach 60.

If you are in a scheme that demands increased contributions every year you should find that payments made while you are off sick will be increased on the same scale. Sun Alliance has just announced that it has become the first pensions provider to offer guaranteed index-linked rises when any waiver-of-contribution policyholder makes a claim, even if they have only been making fixed contributions into their pension plan. Annual increases will be kept in line with the rise in average national earnings. The catch is that this benefit only applied to Sun Alliance pensions taken out after 1 January 1995.

Isabel Berwick writes for Moneywise Magazine

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money

Africa: the final frontier for world investment

The continent is barely on the map for emerging markets investors. But things could change rapidly, says Alison Eadie

Africa is the final frontier of emerging markets. Much of it is underdeveloped and as yet of little interest to foreign investors, but the South African stock market is the world's fifth largest emerging market, according to the IFC Global Composite Index.

While there are several South Africa funds available to private investors, few range across the continent. Barings Simba Fund and GT Africa Fund are, however, both widely invested. Simba is presently in nearly 20 countries, with only 30 per cent of assets in South Africa.

Arnab Banerji, chief investment officer of Foreign & Colonial emerging markets, questions whether a bourse as sophisticated as South Africa's, listing international companies Anglo-American Corporation and De Beers, can really be described as emerging. However, South Africa fits the World Bank per capita income definition of an emerging country.

South Africa, which inevitably dominates African portfolios, has been shunned as too expensive by many fund managers this year. Foreign money poured in last year, pushing the stock market higher, only to see it fall by 17 per cent in the first seven months of this year. The rand has also depreciated by 20 per cent, hurting industrial companies more than mining interests, which are priced in dollars. Prices have not come down enough for value investor Ewen Cameron Watt, head of emerging markets at Mercury. "If I could find cheap stocks, I would buy more."

The issue of exchange controls hangs over the

market. Fears that a flight of domestic capital will follow liberalisation of exchange controls have undermined the rand and led to uncertainty for investors. Until capital flows freely (only asset swaps are presently countenanced) the rand may continue to fall, some believe.

Others are more optimistic. Neil Gregson, manager of the Credit Suisse South Africa unit trust, thinks the run on the currency is nearly over, setting the scene for a significant interest rate cut which will stimulate the economy. He points out that the South African market has never been as cheap as some other emerging markets, but that did not stop it outperforming in 1994 and 1995.

Arnold Shapiro, manager of Old Mutual South Africa investment trust, believes value is returning. Price/earnings ratios are 15 on a current-year basis against 20 a year ago, and corporate earnings growth is robust at 15 per cent this year. South African companies, shielded from the outside world by years of sanctions, are learning to compete.

However, the country's future hinges more on growth in neighbouring states. With peace returning to former war zones, the full potential of resource-rich Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe is yet to be felt.

Of greatest interest at the moment, according to its manager Michael Power, is Egypt. The government is managing the economy well, privatisation is progressing. Egyptians are returning and investing in their country, stock market liquidity is

rising and shares are cheap, he says.

He points out that Egyptians are not new to the equity game. In 1955 the Cairo stock market was fifth busiest in the world in turnover terms, listing the Suez Canal and Ottoman Bank among its stocks. There are nearly 1,000 stocks listed on the Cairo and Alexandria markets.

Institutions have been attracted by Egypt's price/earnings multiples that last year were half the emerging markets' average, and several single country funds have been launched to invest in Egypt. Despite a stock market capitalisation of \$8bn - bigger than Hungary or Poland - Egypt has yet to make it into the benchmark IFC index, although its inclusion is expected by the end of this year.

Elsewhere in Africa Mr Power likes Mauritius and Zimbabwe. The Mauritian economy is growing rapidly, spurred by a well educated and hardworking population, and investable businesses range from hotels and airlines to textiles, sugar and banks. The Zimbabwe stock market has also been strong in recent months and there is no shortage of well managed companies to buy, says Mr Power.

Cautious investors wanting a stake in Africa can opt for a South Africa fund which makes the occasional foray into Zimbabwe or further afield. The Old Mutual trust, which has a strong track record, is presently at a 17 per cent discount to net asset value.

General Africa funds are higher risk and have higher costs. GTF's fund has a minimum investment of \$10,000, a 2 per cent annual management charge and is

incorporated in Bermuda, so is outside the UK regulatory system. The Simba fund is a London listed investment trust with an annual management charge of 1.75 per cent.

Those with true pioneer spirit could dabble in direct investment. Trans Zambezi Industries, dubbed the Hanson of Zimbabwe, recently issued more shares on the Luxembourg stock market and is aiming for a partial listing on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. Formed three years ago, the company has achieved earnings growth of 24 per cent a year in dollar terms from four main divisions - financial services, food and distribution, industrial and investments.

London-listed Lounho, always an Africa play, will be so in purer form after the impending demerger. The African mining interests will end up with Anglo-American as the largest shareholder and the African trading interests, including hotels in Kenya and Mauritius, will be headed up by Dieter Bock, the present chief executive.

Africa is barely on the map for many emerging markets investors. Global funds have only 5 to 10 per cent of assets there, nearly all in South Africa. Much of the continent is too poor, rural, politically unstable and lacking in capital markets to be of interest.

However, economic reform is well under way in many countries. GT points out that many embryonic African stock markets are the same size now as those in Thailand, Turkey, Argentina and Chile were in 1987. The question remains: will African countries emulate the success of emerging markets elsewhere?



The bustling streets of Cairo once contained one of the world's busiest stock markets. Today Egypt is attracting new interest from investors



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Sun Alliance has improved the terms of its pension plans for both new and recent (since January 1995) customers who along with the pension plan choose to take out waiver of contributions insurance. This will maintain their payments until retirement if they become unable to work as a result of sickness or accident.

Sun Alliance's definition of disability has been extended to pay premiums for policyholders who are unable to continue their existing career. The company has also been given permission by the Inland Revenue to index waived contributions,

even if the policyholder had not opted for an indexed pension plan. The insurance usually adds about 3 per cent to the cost of a pension plan.

Bradford & Bingley Building Society has launched a new fixed-rate investment bond offering 7 per cent gross paid annually or 6.75 per cent paid monthly. The rates are fixed until November 1999 and the minimum investment is £1,000.

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Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.94	11.9

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Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.8958	11.20	nil
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Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.4792	10.32	£120
Royal Bank of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05N	14.50N	£35
People's Bank Conn	0500 551055	MasterCard/Visa	£20,000	1.13	14.40	nil

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Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£10,000	5.85
Bristol & West BS	0800 901109	Instant Access Postal	Postal	£25,000	6.05

Chelsea BS	0800 132351	Post-tel 20 Day	20 day P	£5,000	6.05
Cheltenham & Gloucester	0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day P	£100	5.50
First National BS	0800 558844	90 Day Notice	90 day P	£10,000	6.20
Yorkshire BS	0800 378836	Mutual Interest	1 Yr Bond	£1,000	6.25

Wolverhampton	01202 502404	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.00
Halifax BS	01422 385333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.00
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	4.35
Chelsea BS	0800 717515	Classic Postal	Instant	£25,000	4.65

Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Fixed Rate Bond	1/8/97	£5,000	6.25F
Cheltenham & Gloucester	0800 717505	Fixed Rate Bond	31/12/98	£5,000	6.75F
Stroud & Swindon BS	0345 252423	Fixed Rate Bond	1/7/99	£1,000	7.35F
Bristol & West BS	0800 132304	High Income Bond	1/10/2001	£50,000	7.75F

Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£8,575	7.50F
NetWest Bank	0800 200400	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£5,000	7.45F
Birmingham Midshires	0645 720721	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£1,000	7.00
Principality BS	01222 344188	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£500	7.00

Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	1 year	£5,000	4.60F	Year
Pineapple Insurance	0181 207 9007	2 years	£3,000	5.50F	Year
Pineapple Life	0800 838020	3 years	£50,000	5.90F	Year
ITT London & Edinburgh	01903 820820	4 years	£3,000	6.20F	Year
Pineapple Insurance	0181 207 9007	5 years	£3,000	6.50F	Year

Newcastle Bank Gibraltar	00 350 76168	Novo Access	Instant	£25,000	6.30
Newcastle Bank Gibraltar	00 350 76168	Novo Ninety	90 Day	£25,000	6.50
Britannia International	01624 628512	2 Year Bond	31/7/98	£5,000	7.00F
Northern Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Millennium Bond	1/1/00	£10,000	7.50F

Investment Accounts		1 month	£20	4.75	Year
			£500	5.25	Year
			£25,000	5.50	Year
		3 months	£25,000	6.00	Month
			£25,000	6.25	Month

Income Bonds		Series J	5 years	£100	6.65F
			12 months	£1,000	6.00F
				£20,000	6.25F
Capital Bond		Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00F
First Option Bonds		43rd issue	5 year	£100	5.35F
		9th Index linked	5 year	£100	2.50+pi
		Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75F

P post only F fixed rate N net rate A All withdrawals subject to 30 day loss of interest. All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.

Source: MONEYFACTS 01692 500677 22 August 1996



FEAR OF FINANCE Clifford German

The mortgage war has gone quiet during the dog days of summer, although in the last few days Abbey National has introduced a novel Flexi-Break Mortgage, which offers borrowers eight months completely free of interest over the next six years instead of the more conventional discount on the rate in the first year or two. This will look increasingly attractive if mortgage rates rise.

To qualify, the mortgage has to run for at least nine months before the first waiver is taken, the borrower is locked into paying the Abbey's standard variable rate, currently 7.04 per cent up to £60,000 and 6.99 per cent above until November 2002, and the waived interest has to be repaid if the mortgage is redeemed before then. Interestingly, it is not available as a remortgage.

But competition continues to spark in credit cards. Midland Bank is shaving its interest on unpaid balances from 1.59 per cent to 1.545 per cent from September 2, which compares with 1.56 per cent at NatWest, 1.57 per cent at Lloyds, 1.61 per cent at Barclays and 1.67 per cent at the Royal Bank.

Midland is also offering new customers a card with no fees and a low rate of 0.945 per cent a month. Customers with debit balances on other cards can bring their debts across and save interest. After 12 months rates revert to normal, but customers can continue to qualify to pay no annual fees by earning 220 Choice points at a rate of one for every £10 spent.

Which, the consumer organisation, has also ruffled some feathers among the providers of financial services it regularly monitors by launching its own credit card, complete with short-term introductory offer.

The card is fee-free and charges 1.09 per cent a month on unpaid balances.

After 6 months the monthly interest on unpaid balances rises to 1.45 per cent. That is still below the rate charged by long-established conventional credit cards, but is well above the market leaders like Save & Prosper (£12 fee and 1 per cent monthly), or People's Bank's 1.13 per cent a month interest and no annual fee.

The message for credit card users is that there are bargains available, but rates and terms are liable to change as the providers jockey for competitive position, and it is necessary to keep a watchful eye on short-term special terms.

Anyone who is thinking of switching cards as the special discounts come to an end will have to be very careful to surrender one in good time in order not to incur any upfront annual charge for the following year. Stopping using the card alone is not enough.

But the card providers rely on the fact that most of us will forget or will not get round to arranging an alternative card in time and will carry on using the original card out of sheer inertia.

Credit cards are especially useful at holiday time because they can be used to draw money from cash dispensers abroad. Many tourists are still reluctant to use a credit card in an ATM in case the machine swallows the card, leaving the individual up the proverbial creek. But tourists can actually use debit cards to draw cash from ATMs, provided the cards carry the appropriate international symbols.

Access, Mastercard and Visa are automatically acceptable but Switch cards can only be used abroad if the card issuer has an arrangement with Mastercard, in which case the card must have a Maestro logo to make purchases and a Cirrus logo to withdraw cash.

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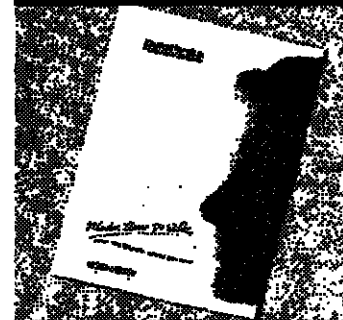
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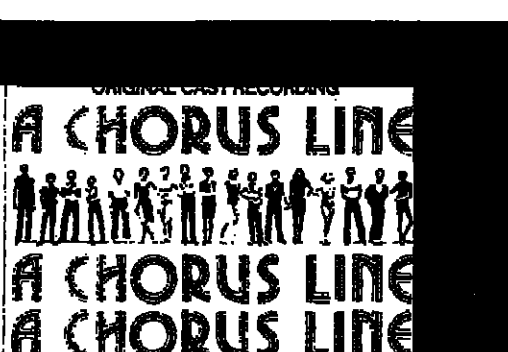
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the week

COMEDY

Ed Byrne, a comedian with everything going for him, has only been once booked and he's not even back in New York. Meanwhile, Ireland has not even had a national election since James Haughey was elected in 1992. *Ed Byrne: Edinburgh* is a comedy album that is both airtight and hilarious. Byrne, the usually career-struggling comedian, is a star. He performs this one set in a room designed for Edinburgh. *Ed Byrne: Edinburgh*. (Capitol, \$14.95).

FILM[illegible][illegible]

Life History Weekend Recreation of 12th century England. *Norman Castle* (01634-840666) 24-24 Aug. phone for details, free.

Sculpture
Living History 1780 Manor inn and pumped to Georgian style.
Sculpture Manor Interior Road (01235-761025) 24-26 Aug. 10.30am-5.30pm, £4. child £2.

Thamesbridge Wells
Shows last opportunity to master m-fishing strategy, roller-sliding and roller-blading.
Assembly Hall Thames Context Room (01892-570615) Today 4.30pm-6pm (family session), 6.30pm-9pm (senior 14+), 8.20pm-10.30pm (open session), £2.50.

[illegible]

1992-1993



ITV/Regions

[illegible]

Perplexity

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Mensa, we offer the following:

IF MENSA + MENSA = DIMWIT and each distinct letter represents a different digit from 0 to 9, what is the value of INSANE?

A copy of the Larousse *Desk Reference Encyclopedia* will be awarded to the sender of the first correct entry opened on 5 September. Entries to: *Saturday Pastimes, the Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

10 August answer:
 xjaj: the items are the numbers, one, two, three ... encoded by advancing the letters by as many places as there are letters in the word. Five letters: on from "seven" makes "xjaj".
 Winner: Amy Moore (Harrow)

diamond. When the finesse failed, East quickly returned a club for the setting trick.

Well, what was West's uncalculated (but accurate) suggestion? At trick two, South should lead a club honour from the table to establish communications. Say West wins and switches to diamonds. Declarer wins with dummy's ace, cashes the ace of trumps and, when nothing falls, abandons trumps. He comes to hand by ruffing a club and discards dummy's remaining two diamonds on top hearts. Then he proceeds on cross-ruff lines and eventually West makes his two trumps tricks. This works against all normal distributions.



JEREMY WARNER

Serious news finds a place in the silly season

Their advisers are absolutely right to claim that these are difficult and complex issues. But this is shareholders' money they are playing with and their failure to explain how their sums were arrived at makes one just a little bit suspicious.

For the dog days of August, this has been a good week for financial news. Perpetual threatened to vote against the life assurance merger between United Friendly and Refuge, claiming the terms were too cosy and, in any case, unfair on Refuge shareholders. Clare Spottiswoode announced a climbdown on proposed price controls for British Gas, which actually turned out to be not much of a compromise at all; the stock market reached a new all-time high - not that there were many in town to notice it - as the Bundesbank threw caution to the winds and cut the German repo rate to just 3 per cent; tobacco industry shares went up in smoke; and then, finally, there was that elusive brewing merger, which was finally meant to happen yesterday and then finally didn't, or at any rate not in time for anyone in the City to know about it as they rushed off early for the long weekend break.

Herein lies my theme. It's a funny thing about August, but even when there is important and serious news to be reported there is an awful temptation to treat it in a flippant and trivial manner. And I'm not the only one. Take the shareanalysts over the United Friendly/Refuge tie up. When I phoned Refuge's financial advisers, Phoenix Securities, to ask about Perpetual's concerns, they put it all down to the silly season. "I wouldn't take it too seriously if I were you", an ever

so annoying representative purred. "It's mainly down to the fact that you chaps in the press have nothing to write about in August and fund managers not a lot to do". So that's why Perpetual, one of Refuge's largest shareholders, is so worked up about it all, is it? Just end of summer madness. Well I never.

No one is suggesting that Refuge and its advisers deliberately went out to short change their own shareholders. That would indeed be ridiculous. But it does seem to me that Perpetual may be right in accusing them of not driving a hard enough bargain. The nub of the allegation is this: that in their haste to get the deal done, Refuge directors allowed themselves to agree too small a share of the company's pension fund and orphan estate surpluses on behalf of their shareholders. Now Refuge's advisers are absolutely right to claim that these are difficult and complex issues. But this is shareholders' money they are playing with and their failure adequately to explain how these sums were arrived at, or in the case of the pension fund surplus, even what the figure is, makes one just a little bit suspicious. At the very least it smacks of complacency.

The term "silly season" took on a whole new meaning when Clare Spottiswoode rose to her feet to announce "final" proposals for gas charges, for that is how

British Gas likes to characterise her - as a giddy, giggling schoolgirl with not too much up there to guide her.

In fact, whether you think her new controls oppressive or not, she's actually been rather clever about it. The new proposals gave the impression of being a very considerable retreat on the position originally taken up last May. Whether this was the intention, is hard to tell, but it was certainly the effect.

John Humphreys railed against her on the BBC's *Today* programme, accusing her of unnecessarily frightening British Gas shareholders with her first set of proposals when all along she was obviously too harsh to be realistic. But when you actually crunch the numbers, the concessions don't seem to make a lot of difference. According to British Gas, the company will be just £400m of revenue better off over the five-year life-span of the controls. That may seem like a lot but against total revenues of £16bn it hardly looks like winning the pools.

British Gas must be sorely tempted to take its case to appeal, for whatever the Monopolies and Mergers Commission do, it cannot be any worse than Ms Spottiswoode is proposing. But in the end I suspect it won't. The MMC is unlikely to make things any worse for British Gas, but by the same token it is hard to see why it should want to make

things any better. Ms Spottiswoode may be about to achieve the near impossible - a very substantial reduction in bills for customers and, because she has been seen to give ground, a recovery in the British Gas share price at the same time. Not so silly after all.

It was nice to see that old joke about the Lman with the broken watch being revived in the pages of the *Financial Times* this week. "Well, at least it's right twice a day", he is able to say. I feel a bit like that about the stock market. I've been a bear for quite some while now and one day I'll be right. For the moment, I'm badly wrong: shares keep on rising with further cuts in European interest rates the latest driving force. The truth of the matter is, however, that they are rising in a vacuum. There is hardly any buying and selling. Dealers may be right to believe there's nothing on the horizon to cloud this gentle upward climb, but then this is August and it's hard to think ill of the world. It is at times like this, with everyone half asleep, that danger creeps up unsuspected. When the pros return, things could change markedly. It will be either politics or Wall Street that changes them.

Then there is that wretched brewing merger we've been waiting for all this time. Wretched, not just because it has taken

so long to negotiate, but also because the only people who really want it are the participants - Bass, Carlsberg and Allied Domecq. For the rest of us, it cannot be anything other than bad news, higher prices, less choice. Fortunately for the participants, this is a merger that is going to be vetted by the British competition authorities, not in Brussels where it might have got a harder time.

When it comes to brewing, the Office of Fair Trading and the Department of Trade and Industry are already hopelessly compromised, for they have already allowed the not dissimilar consolidating merger of Scottish & Newcastle and Courage. Provided the new Bass combine is prepared to negotiate away just a little of its new found market power, it is hard to see how the DTI can logically stand in its way.

I've written about this merger before and in so doing I cited the example of Australia, which has allowed its major brewers to consolidate into just two. A reader writes to point out that with 114 different beer brands still made in Australia, you can hardly complain about lack of consumer choice. The fact that they all taste much the same, that prices are higher, and that in most of Australia the choice is limited to just a couple of brands, is, I guess, neither here nor there.

Lloyd's awaits crucial US court verdict

JOHN WILLCOCK

Lloyd's of London held its breath last night for a US court ruling on its £3bn recovery plan, the crucial launch pad to secure the centuries-old insurance market's future.

The judge in a lawsuit brought against Lloyd's in Richmond, Virginia, by US investors trying to halt the plan has deliberated for two days.

He was due to announce whether to grant an injunction blocking Lloyd's plan late last night.

Ron Sandler, Lloyd's chief executive, said in an affidavit to the Virginia Court this week: "The proposed order if issued would be the death knell of [the plan] and of the Lloyd's market."

"Thirty-four thousand names, as well as hundreds of thousands of insureds would suffer catastrophic loss, uncertainty and dislocation."

The delay caused by a hostile ruling would mean that Lloyd's oversight Council "will not be able to conclude that Lloyd's is a going concern", Mr Sandler said.

Lloyd's is however cautiously confident that it will be able to press ahead with its recovery proposals, under which it aims to reinsure billions of pounds of pollution- and asbestos-related liabilities into a new company called Equitas.

It is asking investors - called names - to help fund Equitas, which will allow the market to pass an annual solvency test, and enable the investors liable for huge pre-1993 losses to end their involvement.

The recovery plan includes a £3.2bn settlement offer to soften the cost to names of the Equitas scheme and end litigation.

The Lloyd's chairman, David Rowland, told Reuters in an interview on Thursday evening that, with only days to go until the 28 August deadline by which Lloyd's wants names to vote on the recovery plan, a substantial number of US names had already accepted.

"I think it's extremely unlikely that the judge would wish to overrule the free choice that they have already made," Mr Rowland said.

While judge Robert Payne has indicated he does not want to derail the recovery plan world-wide, he was also expected to provide the 93 US names in the Virginia case with some sort of relief. There are 2,700 names in the US. The names who launched the latest assault against Lloyd's say the market is violating US securities laws and are demanding more information on syndicate reserves. Lloyd's contends that they are bound by contract to sue in Britain.

An injunction would be significant, since it would prevent Lloyd's from accessing funds needed by the end of September for its recovery plan. But even if granted, an injunction could be challenged. Mr Rowland said Lloyd's would appeal if the ruling went against it.

Mr Rowland expects Lloyd's to obtain the substantial majority of votes in favour which is needed to go ahead with the recovery proposals as planned. He says the total level of acceptances so far is well ahead



Crunch time: David Rowland, chairman of Lloyd's, hopes recovery plan will not be affected Photograph: Edward Webb

of expectations. Once the offer is declared unconditional, Lloyd's could then give those names who have not assented by the voting deadline extra time in which to do so - a potential olive branch to a dis-

ident minority in the US and Britain.

A *Wall Street Journal* report yesterday suggested that the threat to Lloyd's in the US was growing. The insurance market secured a deal last month with

securities regulators in 38 US states broadly solving the problems it has had there.

But the report said top legal officials from New York and Colorado, two states which played key roles in negotiating

the settlement, felt the deal should not prevent American investors in Lloyd's from suing it in the United States.

Lloyd's was unable to comment immediately on the report.

N Wales miners reject pit buyout

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Last ditch efforts to save the Point of Ayr colliery, the last deep mine in North Wales, failed yesterday after 200 miners reluctantly decided not to go ahead with a management buy-out. Owners RJB Mining, which took over the 130-year-old mine from British Coal in 1994, had reportedly been willing to accept an offer of £1.2m, but a study by management consultants convinced the workforce the mine was not viable.

Bernie Haniewicz, secretary of the local branch of the National Union of Mineworkers, said: "My reaction is one of great sadness, but we are big enough to stand up and say 'It's not going to work'. We worked closely with the consultants, so their recommendation did not come as a great surprise."

The mine is to close immediately, and the workforce is now being offered jobs at other RJB mines in Yorkshire and the Midlands, with more than 60 already expressing an interest in moving. Those who do not take up offers will be made redundant on the same terms available when RJB took over the mine in December 1994.

The miners approached RJB just over two weeks ago following the company's closure announced and commissioned consultants KPMG to study the mine's feasibility.

Bill Rowell, RJB's managing director of deep mines, said: "After consulting independent professional experts, they have reached the same conclusion as RJB Mining - that viable mining operations at Point of Ayr cannot be sustained."

The colliery has made money in only two of the 80 weeks it has been owned by RJB, losing £5m in 18 months. Over £2m of equipment will now be removed, RJB said.

The closure leaves only two deep mines left in Wales, at Tower and Betws.

IN BRIEF

• Trafficmaster is raising £16.1m in a one for four rights issue at 290p to extend coverage of its traffic information system with in the UK and expand on the Continent. The new company will complete the British trunk road network, raising coverage from 2,500 miles to around 8,000. In addition, Trafficmaster said it had a deal with Mannesmann Autobahn, part of the German industrial conglomerate, to roll-out a German autobahn network over the next 18 months. Italy, France and the Benelux countries are set to follow. The company said further deals with motor manufacturers to fit equipment to their cars can be expected following the deal announced earlier this month with Vauxhall. Planned investment during 1997 and 1998 is expected to be around £10m. Overall revenues in the six months to June should show modest growth, the company said, while the Vauxhall contract put it on course to at least break-even next year.

• The Office of Passenger Rail Franchising has selected Prism Rail as preferred bidder for both the South Wales & West and Cardiff Railway rail franchises. Prism has already been awarded the London Tilbury Southend rail franchise.

• Monument Oil and Gas, which recently underwent a capital restructuring, said it would concentrate on reinvestment opportunities which would add to shareholder value. The group announced first half profits to June up from £6.4m to £6.9m, but that, once again, no interim dividend will be paid. Despite the delay in commissioning the Liverpool Bay field, profits improved at all levels. Earnings per share were up from 0.91p to 0.98p.

• RTZ's 39 per cent-owned owned associate Palabora Mining reported profits of R353m (£50m) for the six months to June, up from R303m in the half-year before. Turnover jumped from R782m to R856m. The group is paying a dividend of 240 cents.

• More O'Ferrall said an Irish subsidiary had acquired a 60 per cent holding in Nitelites (Ireland) and 100 per cent of Illuminated Awnings Systems for IR£570,000 (£906,000). In the year to March, Nitelites (Ireland) and Illuminated Awnings Systems reported a loss of IR£57,805 and had net liabilities of IR£97,065 in March.

• Tex Holdings said the current year had started ahead of expectations, both in terms of results and order books. It expected all divisions to be profitable in the first half. Pre-tax profits jumped from £111,000 to £223,000 in the year to March, out of which a final dividend of 2p is being paid.

• Zeneca said it needed time to evaluate a new study which suggested users of one of its heart drugs had a higher risk of developing cancer. A report in *The Lancet* quoting Italian and American research said older users of calcium-channel blockers appeared to show a heightened risk of developing cancer. But the researchers said their findings should not prompt anyone to stop using the drugs, which are used to treat high blood pressure and heart disease. Zeneca has certain marketing rights for calcium-channel blockers made by Bayer of Germany.

• Mallet, the antique dealer, said it was well positioned to take advantage of the better outlook for the top end of the antique and fine art trade. Normally the second half started slowly, but this year July and August had been "promising", the company said. However, it warned that stock levels had risen and net cash sales had fallen in the first six months to June, despite pre-tax profits rising from £584,000 to £773,000. Earnings per share advanced from 2.8p to 3.75p, out of which an unchanged interim dividend of 1.1p is being paid.

Shares soar to record despite US clouds

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Shares rose to record highs again yesterday as the FT-SE100 index closed above 3,900 for the first time. Dealers said Thursday's unexpectedly large cut in German interest rates, and the falls across Europe that it triggered, might pave the way for further reductions in the cost of money in the UK.

In relatively thin, pre-holiday

trading, the London market shrugged off strong economic growth figures from the US which suggested the next move in interest rates there might be upwards.

The FT-SE100 index of leading shares ended the final session before the bank holiday 16.4 points higher at 3907.5, having been more than 20 points higher at one stage in the early afternoon.

Demand for durable goods in

the US remained surprisingly strong in July, adding weight to the view that the Federal Reserve might be forced to raise interest rates before the end of the year to rein back inflation.

Durable goods orders in the US during the month increased by 1.6 per cent, four times higher than expectations. Excluding the volatile transportation equipment and military hardware sectors, orders were 3.5 per cent higher.

The strong durables order book contradicted recent housing, industrial output and retail sales figures that all suggested a continuing slowdown in the US, helping to convince Fed chairman Alan Greenspan not to raise interest rates at the most recent policy meeting.

Even as storm clouds loomed in the US, dealers in London turned their attention to the next FTSE100 target of 4,000, although analysts immediately

started questioning whether recent gains were sustainable.

"It's not that far away but I would be moderately surprised to see 4,000 in the ultra short term," said UBS strategist Tim Brown.

The gains of the past month have been dramatic - a near 300 point rise since July 16 and a rebound from the year's low to its high within the space of five weeks.

Market report, page 18

Receivers 'hedge their bets' on interest rates

JOHN WILLCOCK

Global warming could be boosting the number of British businesses going bust.

There has undoubtedly been a significant recovery in the UK economy since the depths of recession four years ago, but the picture is still patchy. Insolvency practitioners say they are more busy than last year.

What does this mean for the debate about interest rates raging between Bank of England Governor Eddie George and the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke?

Mike Wheeler, head of corporate recovery at KPMG, points to two factors behind receivers' recent increase in work. "There was undoubtedly a hiccup in the economy last year, which hit construction companies and those which rely on the housing market."

"Then over the last two years unusual weather has taken a toll on retail suppliers. Summer lasted too long last year so that clothes retailers couldn't shift their winter stock when it arrived."

"Then this year we had unseasonable bad weather in March and April, so suppliers



Eddie George: Double-edged news from receivers' data

were stuck with warehouses full of summer frocks."

Mr Wheeler stresses it only takes a small drop in demand to hit retailers badly.

There was added gloom recently when Deloitte & Touche recorded that companies going into receivership rose in July by 45 per cent against the previous month, and up 20 per cent on the previous July.

This is only a monthly figure - the rate of failures is still lower than in 1995 on a quarterly basis. But what would Mr Wheeler advise on interest rates if he were the Governor for a day?

"I think the economy ought to be capable of accommodating a modest cut in interest rates. It depends on the sector. Certainly construction and house building would welcome a cut."

But Mr Wheeler's view is far from doom and gloom, as the economy approaches the trough of the business cycle. He does not expect another big rise in collapses until 2001.

A lot of these receiverships are getting down to corner shop size, there are much fewer large cases than previous years. I was having lunch with a senior partner at another firm yesterday and he said that we could all afford the time for lunch these days."

For Mr Hamilton, a man who has handled big insolvencies such as Barlow Clowes and Canary Wharf, the biggest threat to the patchy recovery is the lack of confidence in the manufacturing sector.

"Confidence still isn't there. But should we cut rates? I wouldn't put my money either way - I'd hedge my bets."

INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY

Special Report STUDENT FINANCE

On Sunday 25th August the
Independent on Sunday
will publish a special report on student
finance to appear in the Business section.

This report will cover areas such as:

- Which banks are offering the best undergraduate deals.
- Which banks are offering the best deals for post graduates.
- How the student loan scheme actually works and advice on how the loan will have to be paid back.

market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100
3907.5 +16.4

FT-SE 250
4424.8 +22.3

FT-SE 350
1954.9 +8.6

SEAQ VOLUME
538.3m shares,
32,828 bargains

Gifts Index
n/a

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence

115
110
105
100
95
90
85
80
75

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Princess Metropole float stumbles at the first hurdle

TAKING STOCK

Princess Metropole, the Lough hotel arm, may not make it to the stock market starting blocks.

Stories are flowing that Dieter Bock, the man reshaping the international trading group, could be tempted into a trade sale, rather than suffering the rigours of a flotation. Sir Rocco Forte, still seeking an hotel involvement after having the Forte group snatched away by Granada, and Stakis are among the names said to be chasing the Princess.

One theory is that Sir Rocco will buy the 10 Princess resort hotels in the US, Mexico and Caribbean and Stakis will pick up the five UK Metropole hotels. To raise the cash for the Metropole acquisition Stakis could sell its provincial casinos to, possibly, London Clubs International.

Sir Rocco is known to have raised considerable City back-

ing for his hotel comeback. He has bid Granada for parts of his old empire but failed to clinch a deal.

The luxury Princess hotels should meet his ambitions for an upmarket hotel chain. He could find the more functional, conference style Metropole hotels less enticing but Stakis, with a widely spread hotel chain, would have no difficulty accommodating them.

Lough hopes to raise between £600m and £800m from a flotation. Such an inflow would all but wipe out its borrowings. If present talks reach a successful conclusion it could possibly pull in even more cash with less hardship.

Lough, down in the dumps recently, perked up 5.5p to 169p. Stakis was little changed at 108p.

The rest of the stock market was again in full cry with the FT-SE 100 index breaking through 3,900 points in some



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter
of the year

style. Footsie closed 164 points higher at a peak of 3,907.5. It has risen more than 200 points this month.

And the supporting FT-SE 250 index kept up its remorseless progress. It gained 22.3 to 4,424.8, its 18th winning session. Lower interest rate hopes again provided the major spur although the improving economic outlook also helped sentiment.

Turnover, as befits the Friday before an August Bank Holiday, was low with traders not on holiday escaping from the square mile long before the market closed.

BSkyB was the best performing blue chip, hitting 378p

with a 21p gain. British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce flew higher as Airbus Industrie won a \$900m order from the US.

United Airlines, BAE, with 20 per cent of Airbus, rose 19p to 992p and Rolls-Royce, which estimates its share of the contract at £55m, 6.5p to 225.5p.

Allied Domecq, as the Bass takeover of its half-owned Carlsberg-Tetley brewing operation, edged towards completion, gained 10.5p to 450p.

Bass improved 5p to 842p. EMI's first deal as an independent entity - the acquisition of a 10 per cent interest in the GWR radio group - lifted the shares 5p to 1,466p. GWR, buying full control of Classic FM

as part of the EMI link, gained 7p to 206p.

Thorn, the other half of the split, rallied 5p to 394p. Nick Bubb at Mee's Pierson, described the group as a "much improved business" which has moved away from its traditional television/video rental base towards furniture and rent-to-buy. "The proposition is downmarket but at least it's different", he says. He estimates this year's profits at £192m and next year's at £210m.

Tullow Oil rose 7.5p to 107.5p. It confirmed it is about to start testing for gas in Pakistan. The group recently raised £30m from shareholders to pay for its Pakistan and Syrian developments.

Ivern West, as planning permission was granted for its Lisheen zinc/lead mine in Tipperary, edged forward 2p to 90p.

Photo-Me International, the photo booth group, gained

19p to 161p. The shares scored from the Government's identity cards move although profits, due next week, are expected to be lower. Trafficmaster, making traffic monitoring systems, reversed 33p to 324p following a £16.1m rights issue.

Tex, an engineer, added 5p to 76p. It returned to the dividend list with a 2p share payment. Profit was £323,000, around £1m is expected this year.

Prism Rail remained stationary at 265p. It is the preferred bidder for the South Wales & West and Cardiff Railway franchises. The company already has the London, Tilbury and Southend franchise.

Colleagues, the marketing group with the dubious distinction of two profit warnings in a fortnight, fell 7p to 91p. The shares were around 250p before problems surfaced.

Galaxy Media Corporation, a grandly named showbiz bidder, rose 20p to 175p, a peak, on the back water Seats share market. The former CSC Investment Trust is the vehicle of television producer Mike Mansfield, who pumped his production company into GMC in exchange for shares. Chesterbridge, controlled by insurance man Christopher Moran, has 25 per cent with Mansfield interests able to go to 49 per cent as earn outs fall in. There is talk GMC has TV acquisitions in the pipeline.

Marine & Mercantile jumped 17p to 100p. The excitement stemmed from its Czech involvement with a coal bed methane development. On Wednesday, when producing interim results, M&M talked about a Czech programme of "re-entry and testing" of coal four wells.

Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Banks, Merchant

Stock	Price	Chg
Barclays	10.00	+0.10
HSBC	10.00	+0.10
Midland	10.00	+0.10
NatWest	10.00	+0.10
Paragon	10.00	+0.10

Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg
Bank of Scotland	10.00	+0.10
First Direct	10.00	+0.10
Halifax	10.00	+0.10
London City	10.00	+0.10
Yorkshire	10.00	+0.10

Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Building/Construction

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Building Materials

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Chemicals

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Electronics

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Engineering

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Food Manufacturers

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Food Distribution

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Health Care

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Investment Companies

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Investment Trusts

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Leisure & Hotels

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Media

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Oil, Integrated

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Oil, Refining

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Other Financial

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Pharmaceuticals

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Printing & Paper

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Real Estate

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Retail, Food

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	+0.10
Beck's	10.00	+0.10
Carlsberg	10.00	+0.10
Heineken	10.00	+0.10
Stout	10.00	+0.10

Retail, General

Stock	Price	Chg
Adnoca	10.00	

ING STOCK

...and the other is the fact that the ...

money

Africa: the final frontier for world investment

The continent is barely on the map for emerging markets investors. But things could change rapidly, says Alison Eadie

Africa is the final frontier of emerging markets. Much of it is underdeveloped and as yet of little interest to foreign investors, but the South African stock market is the world's fifth largest emerging market, according to the IFC Global Composite Index.

While there are several South Africa funds available to private investors, few range across the continent. Barings Simba Fund and GT Africa Fund are, however, both widely invested. Simba is presently in nearly 20 countries, with only 30 per cent of assets in South Africa.

Arnab Banerji, chief investment officer of Foreign & Colonial emerging markets, questions whether a bourse as sophisticated as South Africa's, listing international companies Anglo-American Corporation and De Beers, can really be described as emerging. However, South Africa fits the World Bank per capita income definition of an emerging country.

South Africa, which inevitably dominates African portfolios, has been shunned as too expensive by many fund managers this year. Foreign money poured in last year, pushing the stock market higher, only to see it fall by 17 per cent in the first seven months of this year. The rand has also depreciated by 20 per cent, hurting industrial companies more than mining interests, which are priced in dollars. Prices have not come down enough for value investor Ewen Cameron Watt, head of emerging markets at Mercury. "If I could find cheap stocks, I would buy more."

The issue of exchange controls hangs over the

market. Fears that a flight of domestic capital will follow liberalisation of exchange controls have undermined the rand and led to uncertainty for investors. Until capital flows freely (only asset swaps are presently countenanced) the rand may continue to fall, some believe.

Others are more optimistic. Neil Gregson, manager of the Credit Suisse South Africa unit trust, thinks the run on the currency is nearly over, setting the scene for a significant interest rate cut which will stimulate the economy. He points out that the South African market has never been as cheap as some other emerging markets, but that did not stop it outperforming in 1994 and 1995.

Arnold Shapiro, manager of Old Mutual South Africa investment trust, believes value is returning. Price/earnings ratios are 15 on a current-year basis against 20 a year ago, and corporate earnings growth is robust at 15 per cent this year. South African companies, shielded from the outside world by years of sanctions, are learning to compete.

However, the country's future hinges more on growth in neighbouring states. With peace returning to former war zones, the full potential of resource-rich Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe is yet to be felt.

Of greatest interest at the moment, according to its manager Michael Power, is Egypt. The government is managing the economy well, privatisation is progressing, Egyptians are returning and investing in their country, stock market liquidity is

rising and shares are cheap, he says.

He points out that Egyptians are not new to the equity game. In 1955 the Cairo stock market was fifth busiest in the world in turnover terms, listing the Suez Canal and Ottoman Bank among its stocks. There are nearly 1,000 stocks listed on the Cairo and Alexandria markets.

Institutions have been attracted by Egypt's price/earnings multiples that last year were half the emerging markets' average, and several single country funds have been launched to invest in Egypt. Despite a stock market capitalisation of \$8bn - bigger than Hungary or Poland - Egypt has yet to make it into the benchmark IFC index, although its inclusion is expected by the end of this year.

Elsewhere in Africa Mr Power likes Mauritius and Zimbabwe. The Mauritian economy is growing rapidly, spurred by a well educated and hardworking population, and investable businesses range from hotels and airlines to textiles, sugar and banks. The Zimbabwe stock market has also been strong in recent months and there is no shortage of well managed companies to buy, says Mr Power.

Cautious investors wanting a stake in Africa can opt for a South Africa fund which makes the occasional foray into Zimbabwe or further afield. The Old Mutual trust, which has a strong track record, is presently at a 17 per cent discount to net asset value.

General Africa funds are higher risk and have higher costs. GTF's fund has a minimum investment of \$10,000, a 2 per cent annual management charge and is

incorporated in Bermuda, so is outside the UK regulatory system. The Simba fund is a London listed investment trust with an annual management charge of 1.75 per cent.

Those with true pioneer spirit could dabble in direct investment. Trans Zambezi Industries, dubbed the Hanson of Zimbabwe, recently issued more shares on the Luxembourg stock market and is aiming for a partial listing on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. Formed three years ago, the company has achieved earnings growth of 24 per cent a year in dollar terms from four main divisions - financial services, food and distribution, industrial and investments.

London-listed Lourho, always an Africa play, will be so in purer form after the impending demerger. The African mining interests will end up with Anglo-American as the largest shareholder and the African trading interests, including hotels in Kenya and Mauritius, will be headed up by Dieter Bock, the present chief executive.

Africa is barely on the map for many emerging markets investors. Global funds have only 5 to 10 per cent of assets there, nearly all in South Africa. Much of the continent is too poor, rural, politically unstable and lacking in capital markets to be of interest.

However, economic reform is well under way in many countries. GT points out that many embryonic African stock markets are the same size now as those in Thailand, Turkey, Argentina and Chile were in 1987. The question remains: will African countries emulate the success of emerging markets elsewhere?



The bustling streets of Cairo once contained one of the world's busiest stock markets. Today Egypt is attracting new interest from investors



LOOSE CHANGE

Sun Alliance has improved the terms of its pension plans for both new and recent (since January 1995) customers who along with the pension plan choose to take out waiver of contributions insurance. This will maintain their payments until retirement if they become unable to work as a result of sickness or accident.

Sun Alliance's definition of disability has been extended to pay premiums for policyholders who are unable to continue their existing career. The company has also been given permission by the Inland Revenue to index waived contributions,

even if the policyholder had not opted for an indexed pension plan. The insurance usually adds about 3 per cent to the cost of a pension plan.

Bradford & Bingley Building Society has launched a new fixed-rate investment bond offering 7 per cent gross paid annually or 6.75 per cent paid monthly. The rates are fixed until November 1999 and the minimum investment is £1,000.

Barclaycard holders who have access to the Internet can now use it to pay gas, electricity, phone and water bills. They can also apply for a

Barclaycard's Gold Card with a minimum credit limit of £2,500, and also redeem Profiles points. <http://www.barclaycard.co.uk>

General Accident Direct's single-trip travel insurance is now available on the net on <http://www.ga.co.uk/gadirect>.

Broker Hargreaves Lansdown is offering readers a free copy of its latest guide to shareholder perks, along with details of the forthcoming Thistle Hotels share flotation, which will offer founder shareholders 15 per cent off bills at any group hotel or restaurant. Call 0800-850661.

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(IND 24/8/96)

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ERRICK WHYTE
ports from Brussels

Photograph: Jamie Squire/Allsport

Britain also picked up an equestrian team gold after a protest against the original winners from Germany, was upheld. The Germans plan to appeal.

The bowlers Irene Cheer and Vera Moore both won, and the Scottish swimmer Jim Anderson took his second gold of the Games in the 50m backstroke.

The latest day of competition saw heavy rain and storms wipe out several events, lightning damaging the official scoreboard at the Olympic Stadium.

for 3 but still with a great deal to do if the weather relents.

[illegible]

(Sire) by F Wobler (Neth) 6-3-6-3; A Vonner (Rom) by N Waggoner (Neth) 5-7-6-0-8-2; J Sank (US) by V Spades (US) 6-2-6-7-7-6.

BRITISH JUNIOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
(Nottingham) Boys 18-and-under singles, semi-finals: A Parmer (Herts) by C Edmondson (Lancs) 6-2-6-2; W Herbert (Middlesex) by A Mackon (Soc) 6-2-6-3. Doubles: Sank D Heron (Durham and Cleveland) and D Sherwood (Yorkby) by S Clark (Wes-
sex) and A Parmer (Herts) 6-4-6-4, Boys' 14-and-under doubles, final: S Lockwood (Suffolk) and J Nelson (Northumberland) by L Childs (Somerset) and J Featherston (North Wales) 6-2-6-3.

Derbyshire	0891 525 370
Durham	0891 525 371
Essex	0891 525 372
Glamorgan	0891 525 373
Glouce.	0891 525 374
Hampshire	0891 525 375
Kent	0891 525 376
Lancashire	0891 525 377
Leics.	0891 525 378
Middlesex	0891 525 379
Northants	0891 525 380
Notts.	0891 525 381
Somerset	0891 525 382
Surrey	0891 525 383
Sussex	0891 525 384
Warwicks.	0891 525 385
Worcs.	0891 525 386
Yorkshire	0891 525 387



COMEDY

Ed Byrne. A comedian with everything going for him—he's cute, he's not from London and he wins over the critics. He's now Moran apart, Ireland has not produced a comic of such promise since Sean Hayes. **pg 31-32, Air, Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh**
Chris Charles. Herdittin' comic bard and star of *Mid Wyck* has recently carved a reputation for himself as a stand-up. He performs this one-off before before disappearing to Edinburgh. **Sw, Burgh's Sports, London, W1**
Phil Lusk. (above) He fills the stage as he re-enacts *primrose* on the bonnet of his Ford Sierra at Longdon or works up a spellbinding mime sequence involving an argument between three

FILM

Chalfont St Giles
Children's Deep Blue Holiday events and activities throughout the month.
Deep Blue, 1000 High Wycombe Road, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4NR. Tel: 0494-847111 (5 p.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 11-Apr. 11).

Cheltenham
A Celebration of Craftsmanship Largest festival celebration of leading British designers/makers. *Thameside, Vale Gateway Bus Station, Cheltenham (01242) 2385521. From 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. until 1 Sep. £5, concs. £2.*

Chesham-on-Sea
The Summer Breeze and Computer Baby Rock Band. *Holiday Ring and Buy sale and Internet demonstrate. Chesham Leisure Centre Vista Road (01474) 241531. Sun 10 p.m. 10 p.m.-4 p.m. £1.50, concs. child 50p.*

Glastonbury
Glastonbury Children's Festival Rock Holiday special with performances, workshops and activities. *Abbey Park, Painsford (01258) 632921. 10 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. for details.*

Hay-on-Wye
Hay-on-Wye International Festival Two weeks of dance, music and drama from around the world.
Hay-on-Wye International Festival Box Office Various Venues (01497) 621249. Times vary each day. Prices from £2.50.

Haywards Heath
Haywards Craft Fair Book Holiday. *Mixed & themed shows, case of British crafts. Wakehurst Place (01344) 474787. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sun. Free-£2.*

Hick Wycombe
Children's Fun For all Land Children's brownie characters in a new show.
Wycombe Show St Mary Street (01494) 512000. Today 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. £2.50.

London
London Antiques Fair Exhibitors selling a wide range of antique jewellery, porcelain, glass, furniture and decorative items.
Royal Horticultural Society, Halls (01875) 230000. Sun 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £3.50. £1.50, concs. £1.50.
Carlisle Royal Antiques Fair Book Holiday. *Antiques with original street furniture, old mailings, tin, artwork, medals, baroque glass, 18th C. Sun 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. £2.50.*

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Seagrave
Living History 1220 Manor ruin and people dressed in Georgian style.
Seagrave Manor Manor Road (off 295-761205) 24-26 Aug. 10.30am-5.30pm. 12. child £2.

Timbridge Wells
State Jam Opportunity to master in-line skating, roller-skating and roller-blading.
Assembly Hall Tudor Crescent Road
01892-530613. Today 4.30pm-6pm 1 family

SENSE

Twelfth

Clark Road, SE 11th Ave. in Park Plaza, Mr. Service: 5pm Mice. 1st: 5pm, 10am Low for three voices. 2nd: Solomon Evenington in Low Mass. 3rd: 5pm HC: 10:30pm

4pm Ex
n2d N

Rev. Paul H. Hain
 Henry Ruchhoeft
 A.15am H.C. 11am
 Enchirid. Men u
 Rev Christopher
 Rev. Loris May
 Solomon Brenning

Sung B.

St Andrew & St Agnes (Lutheran), Greenham Street, EC2
11am Choral HC The Rev Barnabas Dunk
Temple Church (Christian Community), Queen Car
olus Street, W1: 10.45am The Act of Consecra
tion of Man. The Rev E. Capel
Westminster Chapel (Independent Evangelical
Brotherhood (Cauc, SW1), 11am, 6.30pm, The Rev
Grev Harlan.

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WINTER ADVICE: Nam HIC, Nam Matsui, Cebu regale (Howells), Canon David Hunt, an Abbey Enclosure, Mass of the quiet hour (yd), Canon David Hunt: 3pm Evensong, rd in A. The Rev. Mervyn Johnson.

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SPORT



Play INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL
In tomorrow's Independent On Sunday

THIRD TEST: England capitulate to onslaught from Waqar and Wasim before tourists' batsmen claim ascendancy

Saeed century puts Pakistan in command

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from The Oval
England 326; Pakistan 229-1

As wet grey skies shifted east and the second day's play in the third Test was resumed at 2.15 pm, high summer returned to the Oval. Unfortunately it was not England who basked in the afternoon sunshine, but their opponents, as first ball then bat was wielded with skill and fury, a 135-run century by Saeed Anwar the stunning centre piece of a telling day's cricket.

Pakistan, of course, do not need to win this match to take the series, yet judging by the pace of their innings they clearly intend to. In 56 overs, 229 runs were scored as England's bowlers managed to reduce the value of John Crawley's maiden century in a performance that was lacking in both guile or direction. In going all out for wickets, England forgot that at this level, it also pays to get the ball consistently in the right place.

Saeed Anwar, a player who needs little temptation to play his shots, took full advantage of England's errors, wristily slashing and scurrying balls wide of off-stump down to the vacant third man boundary. He plays with an air of regal insouciance, which was made to look even more impressive by the inability of Chris Lewis and Alan Mullally to get the new ball off the straight.

Anwar, his fellow left-

hand, was less delicate, hammering square anything wide with the gusto of a man given an enormous gong to strike.

Only Robert Croft, in his first bowl for England, looked at all dangerous, though judging by the volume and frequency of his shouts for lbw, the umpire is more likely to "cock a deaf 'un" than uphold one of his numerous appeals.

After the wayward probings of his opening bowlers, Atherton decided to turn to Croft as early as the 10th over. It clearly surprised the Glamorgan spinner, who would not have expected to bowl this early on a raging bunsen burner at Swansea, and he prodded himself for confirmation.

Bowling round the wicket, he forced Anwar into gratuitous use of the front pad. A method that frustrated the off-spinner, whose backchat earned him a rebuke from umpire Cyril Cooray. Still Anwar was never entirely happy and after tea, a change to the Vauxhall End proved propitious when the off-spinner had Pakistan's vice-captain caught on the drive by Dominic Cork at short extra cover.

It was England's only success as the visitor's rattled along. Quite why England left out Andrew Caddick is still a mystery, and although purists will have enjoyed seeing spinners bowling in tandem, the previous evidence - one wicket here since 1991 - is not exactly compelling, something an unbroken partnership of

123 between Ijaz Ahmed - who scored a brutal half-century - and Saeed confirmed.

If Pakistan's batsmen played the ball with nonchalant ease, the experience of England's batsmen was in stark contrast to the free scoring of the first day. John Crawley, poised six agonising runs short of a maiden Test century lost two partners advancing his score by just two, as Ian Salisbury and Dominic Cork swished unwisely.

Cork is not having the run old time he enjoyed last year at this level. His bowling, suffering from a combination of over-exposure and lack of swing has not been as penetrative.

Despite the brittleness of England's late order, Crawley eventually reached the landmark with a trademark stroke, an all-run four from a neat leg-side clip off Waqar Younis. His muted acknowledgement of the feat was refreshing, and it spoke of unfinished business at the crease.

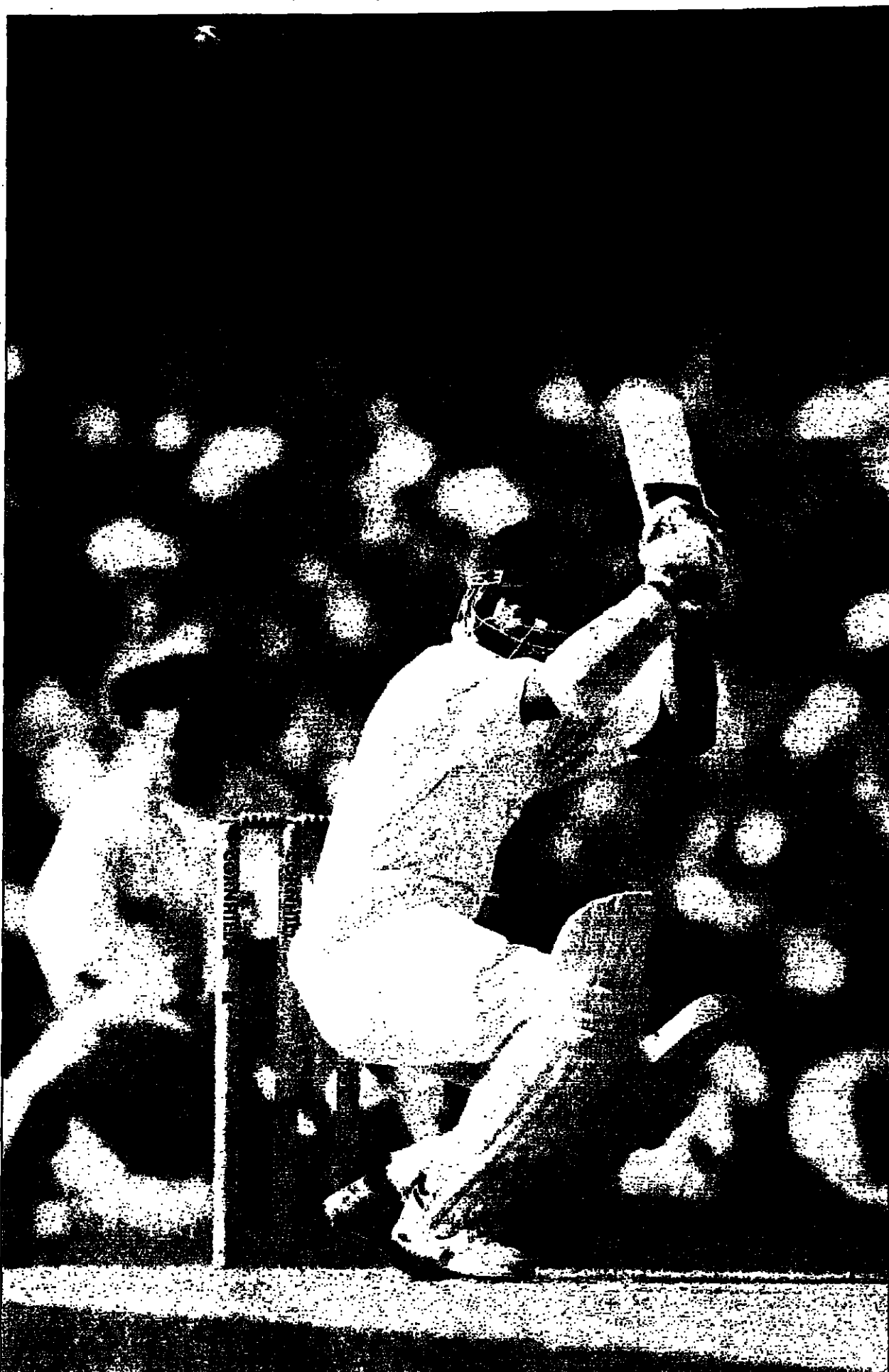
Fortified by the potency of his actions, he promptly cut Waqar to the cover boundary, but quickly toppled is the man who feels he has the measure of Waqar. The fast bowler skidded one under Crawley's bat to hit half-way up off-stump, the Lancashire man succumbed by a combination of pace and low bounce.

His dismissal immediately curtailed England's aspirations of a big score and but for some inspired clouts from Alan Mullally, who alternated glorious drives with fortuitous top edges, England might not have topped 300.

As it was, the 326 scored, would have been a huge disappointment for the home side, with the remainder of yesterday's innings being wrapped up in less than 10 overs: the conspiracy of a new ball on a pitch that had sweated under covers, providing the extra zing for Wasim Akram (with three) and Waqar (with four) to get among the wickets.

The huge green gasometer that is a symbol of this ground was full on Thursday, when Crawley had played so well. Now, it is sinking fast. Unless England take quick wickets they will sink with it.

County reports, page 23



Saeed Anwar keeps his head down on the way to a fine century at The Oval

Photograph: David Ashdown

Sad tail ignores basics

HENRY BLOFELD

It would have been interesting to know what, if anything, was going through the minds of Ian Salisbury and Dominic Cork as they went about the business of trying to see John Crawley to his hundred and England to 350. They batted as if it had never occurred to them to do either.

It should have been their job to make one end safe while the last recognised batsman collected those anxious six runs and then to have given him every chance to push the score along afterwards. It was elementary.

And yet what happened? After taking a controlled single to third man off Waqar Younis in the first over, Salisbury played a fly-swat of a hook at Wasim Akram in the next which lobbed to square leg where there was no field and he picked up two runs.

Two balls later down came another short one. Salisbury tried to repeat the stroke and the ball flew off the bat to Izumam-yi-Haq at first slip. Crawley, who was 95, must have been completely bemused standing at the non-striker's end.

Whenever Cork bats against Pakistan he will always be made to remember those bouncers he bowled at Pakistan's lower order at Headingley and Lord's. As soon as he came in he was ducking and weaving against Wasim and each bouncer was followed by a lengthy glaring match.

Before Waqar started his next over to Cork, he and Wasim had a long conversation. Cork was looking unsettled and to the second ball played a wild forcing shot off the back foot to a ball wide enough to have left alone and he was caught behind. It is hard to believe that batsmen at this level - albeit in the lower order - do not know what is expected of them in circumstances like these.

Crawley was 96 and with only two wickets to fall he must have felt that he was in danger of running out of partners. However, a nice shot off his legs against Waqar brought him his hundred.

A first Test century brings so much confidence with it. Crawley will now feel he belongs in the side as Nick Knight will have done after his hundred at Headingley. A score of 94 is excellent but inevitably it leaves the sour taste of the hundred just missed. Hundreds are remembered, 90s are not. They were six important runs for Crawley - and for England too, one hopes.

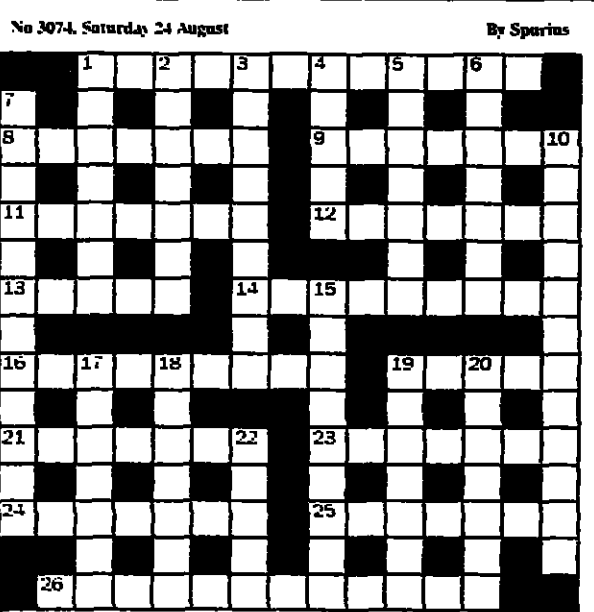
The Oval scoreboard

England won toss	Aamir Sohail 6-5-37-0 (1-0-7-0; 5-1-10-0)
England - First Innings	Progress: Rain delayed start until 2.15pm
(Overseas: 278 for 8)	300: 396 min, 96.1 overs, Innings closed: 3.03pm
J P Crawley b Waqar Younis.....106	Crawley 50: 90 min, 70 balls, 6 fours, 200
(157 min, 21.7 balls, 12 runs)	254 min, 213 balls, 11 fours
D A Salisbury c Inzamam b Wasim.....5	PAKISTAN - First Innings
(28 min, 21 balls)	Saeed Anwar not out.....116
D G Cork c Mohd b Waqar.....0	Aamir Sohail c Cork b Croft.....46
(15 min, 5 balls)	Ijaz Ahmed not out.....58
R D Croft not out.....5	Saeed Anwar not out.....229
(53 min, 18 balls)	Total (for 2, 56 overs).....326
A D Mullally b Wasim.....24	Fall: 1-106 (Anwar)
(21 min, 22 balls, 5 fours)	In bats: Inzamam-ul-Haq, Salim Malik, Asif
Extras (b12, w1, nb10).....29	Musabbab, Wasim Akram, Niaz Khan,
Total 623 min, 98.2 overs.....326	Muhammad Aslam, Waqar Younis, Mohammad
Fall: (century: 7-283 (Salisbury), 8-284	Aamir)
(Cork), 8-295 (Crawley)	Bowling: Lewis 9-1-49-0; Mullally 9-3-28-0;
Bowling: Wasim Akram 22-2-43-3 (nb6)	Croft 17-3-42-1; Cork 7-1-38-0; Salisbury
5-3-50, 4-1-17-0, 7-1-29-0, 4-1-7-0,	14-0-71-0
9-2-3-25-3; Waqar Younis 25-6-66-4	Unlabeled: M J Kitchen (Eng) and B C Cooray
5-1-29-0, 7-1-29-0, 5-3-10-0, 8-1-26-2	(Sh Lark)
Muhammad Aslam 12-1-41-3 (nb2, w1)	Tandem umpires: J C Baddestone,
(3-0-18-0, 2-0-4-0, 7-1-19-1; Wasim	Match referee: P L van der Merwe
Akram 27-6-78-2 (13-4-45-1, 14-1-32-1)	

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

Meaning what?

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- ACROSS:
- A creamy sauce with essence, one that's abs-tutely divine! (7)
 - Fit in Greek character to create a dramatic scene (7)
 - Creative Frenchman at home, protected by security device (7)
 - Supervise deliveries to church office (7)
 - Portable light article carried by lieutenant initially entering service (7)
 - Rise and dress (3-2)
 - Left, i.e. retired, creating opening for a new fellow (9)
 - Not to be snuffed out (9)
 - In Nougat, a charming country cottage (5)
 - Fishing organisation (7)
 - Envelopes of Italian origin (7)
 - Charity for homeless located by harbour (7)
 - Body ornament displayed by 50% of arrivals in England (7)
 - Begonia plant here growing wild, absorbing large volume of water (10-31)
 - Passport-holder initially conveyed in boat and plane (7)
 - Exercise involving journalists at Oxford (5-2)
 - Mention note written in course of nature writing, mid-September (9)
 - Hunt would have used it, beheading small animal (5)
 - Dressed richly, casual gear about to be given up (7)
 - Yellow stuff coming from injured knee Grandma's nursing (7)
 - Well-defended military positions, as in the forties, we hear? (12)
 - Artistic works representing the limits of what's permissible? (4-8)
 - Off to wrap regalia item in something like sponge? (9)
 - Run out of inverted ceramic ridge-tiles? (7)
 - Sadly grieved to part (7)
 - Relatively bright Catholic's heading bishop's staff (7)
 - King, one pierced by weapon - it's fate (5)

THE FRANKLIN SCRAMBLE: Make the longest word you can from REFERENCE. Yesterday's Scramble: GLOSSARY

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Houston makes peace with Wright

Football

Arsenal's stand-in manager, Stewart Houston, has had clear the air talks with his volatile striker Ian Wright and told him: "Count to 10 before you open your mouth."

Last season's top scorer was only a substitute in Arsenal's first two games of the season and claimed the Highbury coaching staff "blanked me for three or four days" after he backed the club's directors for giving their manager, Bruce Rioch, the sack just five days before the start of the season. Houston called Wright in for a "one-to-one chat" and believes the situation is now settled, but he will still not guarantee him a first-team start at Leicester today, even though Wright made his first 90-minute appearance for the reserves on Wednesday and scored a brilliant goal.

Houston said: "Ian's a strong-minded guy and likes to say his piece but I've told him, like I've told the rest of the players, that the only thing he should concentrate is on the football."

"It is only on the pitch where the players can make a difference and I've told Ian he should learn to count from one to ten before he answers questions about emotive subjects."

"I don't know if he will ever change, but the main thing is we need him back in the team scoring goals. Whether that will be tomorrow I can't say at this stage but the fact is he has not started a Premiership game yet because he hasn't been fully fit after having 12 days out with a calf injury. It takes time to reach the right standard of fitness and we want Ian at his best. He's had a game this week, done well in training and we'll see how he is tomorrow."

Houston, still unsure when new manager Arsene Wenger is going to arrive and take over the team, is again without £4.75m midfielder David Platt at Filbert Street.

Platt, who has hairline crack in his back, admits: "I'm still only up to about three-quarter pace and first-team football needs more than that, but hopefully I won't be out for much longer."

The injury has cost Platt a place in Glenn Hoddle's first World Cup squad for the game in Moldova on September 1, but Houston who hopes to give him a reserve team run-out on Thursday, says: "I've no problem with David apart from the injury which is very unlucky. "It was obviously a breakdown in communications before the West Ham game and people shouldn't read too much into or blow things up out of proportion."

THE WEEKEND'S SPORTING HIGHLIGHTS

In Monday's 24-page sports section Can Damon Hill (left) build on his world championship lead? Derek Allison reports from the Belgian Grand Prix



Reports and analysis from the second weekend of the football season plus That Was The Weekend That Was, our alternative guide to the game

Derek Pringle, Henry Blofeld and Simon O'Hagan report from the third Test between England and Pakistan at the Oval

John Roberts looks ahead to the US Open, the final Grand Slam tennis tournament of the year



In tomorrow's Independent on Sunday

"For me he is a player, like Le Tissier in many respects, who sees the furthest one first. There are enough players around who see the nearest ball first, but if you see the furthest one first then come back from there, your options are better."

Glenn Hoddle talks to Ian Ridley about the vision, skill and potential of David Beckham (right) of Manchester United and now England

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